Author:
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Illustrator:
Chisato Naruse

My Instant Death Ability is So Overpowered, No One in This Other World Stands a Chance Against Me!

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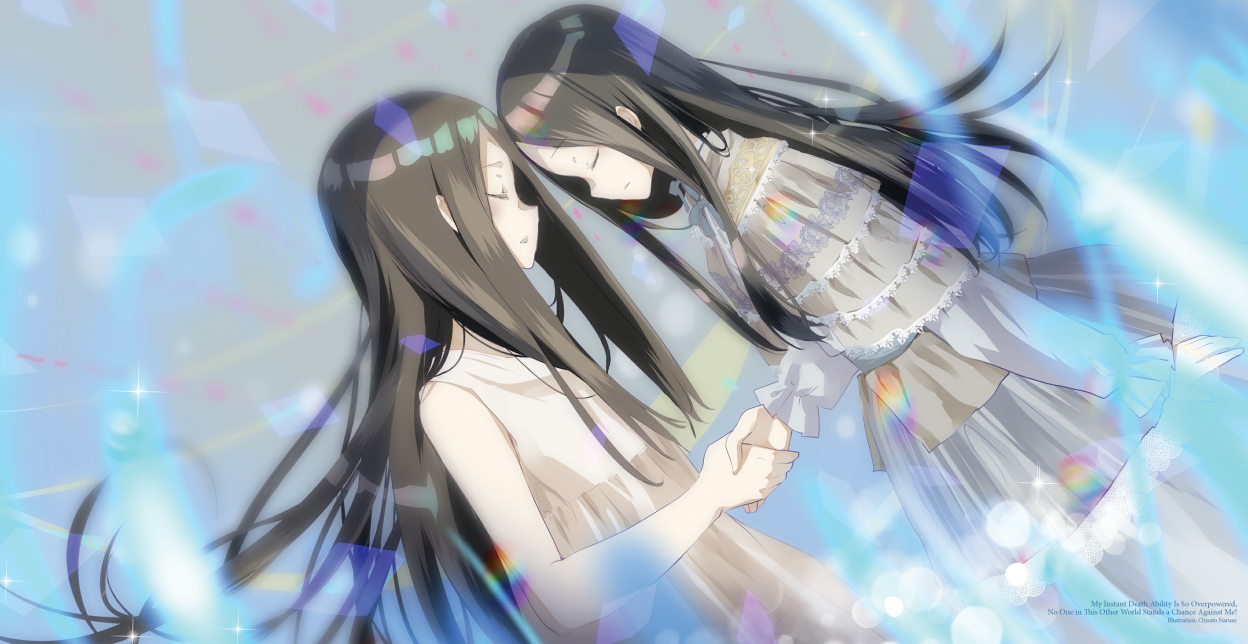

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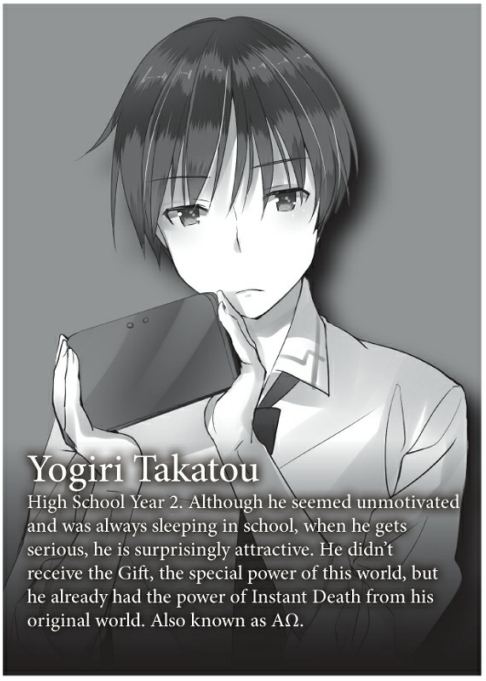
CHARACTERS

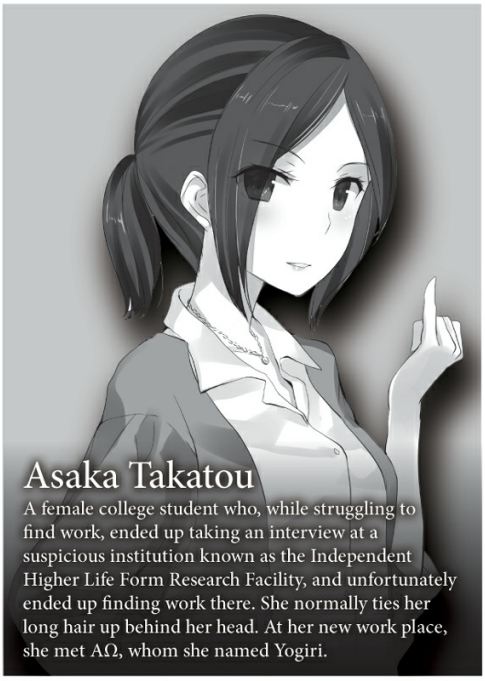
Tomochika Dannoura

High School Year 2. Although she looks quite attractive and has quite the ample chest, her role is unfortunately that of the Straight Man. Like Yogiri, she did not receive the power of the Gift, but she is trained in a martial art derived from the ancient Dannoura style of archery.



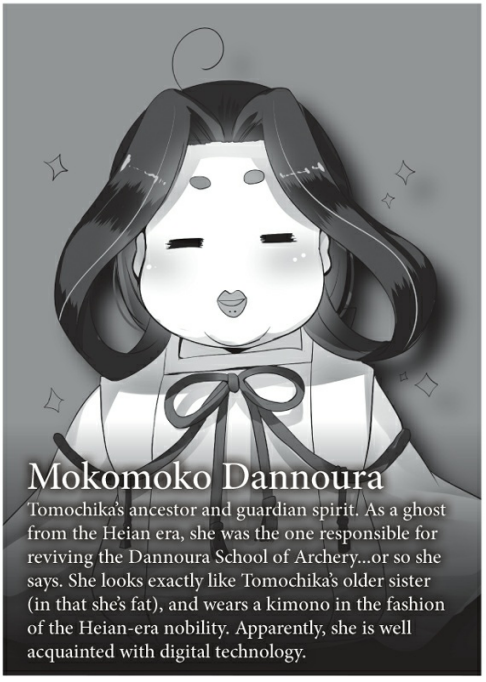
Yogiri Takatou

High School Year 2. Although he seemed unmotivated and was always sleeping in school, when he gets serious, he is surprisingly attractive. He didn't receive the Gift, the special power of this world, but he already had the power of Instant Death from his original world. Also known as AΩ.



Asaka Takatou

A female college student who, while struggling to find work, ended up taking an interview at a suspicious institution known as the Independent Higher Life Form Research Facility, and unfortunately ended up finding work there. She normally ties her long hair up behind her head. At her new work place, she met AΩ, whom she named Yogiri.



Mokomoko Dannoura

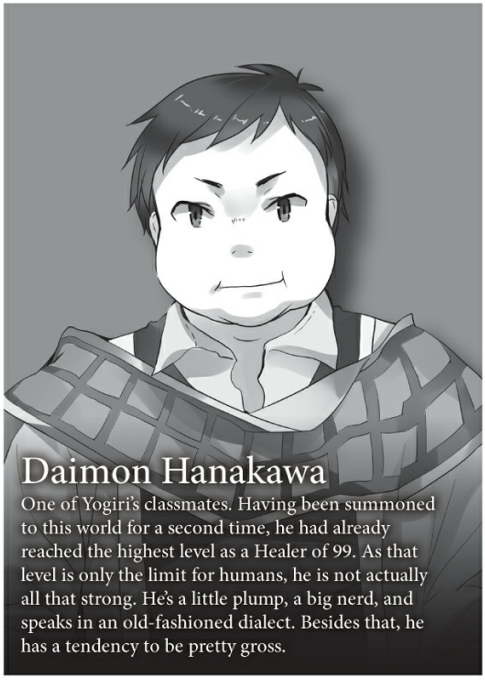
Tomochika's ancestor and guardian spirit. As a ghost from the Heian era, she was the one responsible for reviving the Dannoura School of Archery...or so she says. She looks exactly like Tomochika's older sister (in that she's fat), and wears a kimono in the fashion of the Heian-era nobility. Apparently, she is well acquainted with digital technology.

Ryouko Ninomiya

One of Yogiri's classmates. Actually, she was dispatched by the research facility that had hidden him to watch Yogiri. She has a tool designed to monitor him installed on her smartphone. Though she was a ninja back home, in this world her class is Samurai. She fights in a traditional Samurai's garb with two swords.

Enju Sumeragi

A girl who came to hide at the Independent Higher Order Lifeform Research Institute while Yogiri was living there with Asaka. One of the few people Yogiri grew attached to. For that reason, robots were made with her appearance to combat him. Part of the Sumeragi family, who rule Japan from the shadows.



Daimon Hanakawa

One of Yogiri's classmates. Having been summoned to this world for a second time, he had already reached the highest level as a Healer of 99. As that level is only the limit for humans, he is not actually all that strong. He's a little plump, a big nerd, and speaks in an old-fashioned dialect. Besides that, he has a tendency to be pretty gross.

Carol S. Lane

One of Yogiri's classmates. An American who joined their class as she entered high school. Like Ryouko, she was tasked with monitoring Yogiri, but she works for the Agency. Her class in this world is Ninja, and she wears a red ninja outfit and forehead protector when fighting. Her weapon is a ninja sword.

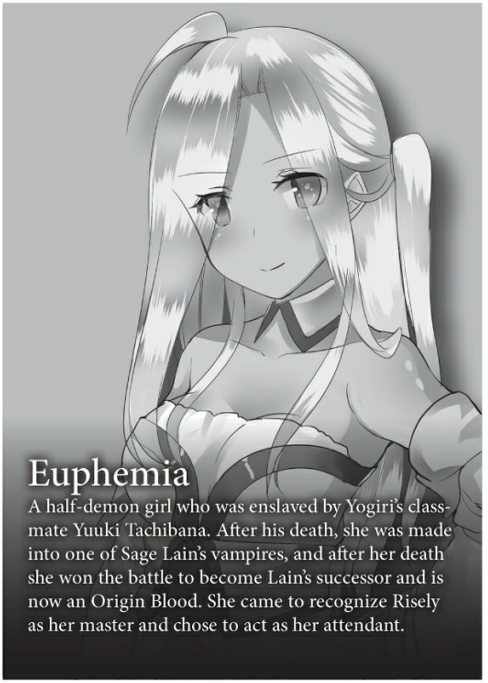
CHARACTERS

Hiruko

A god and an Aggressor who forced her way into this world. Using another Aggressor known as the Wolf King, she was looking for her mother, Luu. After finding Luu with Yogiri's group and realizing she hadn't fully recovered, Hiruko joined them to search for the remaining Philosopher's Stones.

Luu

A girl created when the Philosopher's Stones Yogiri's group had collected fused together. She started as a baby but after fusing with seven stones took on the appearance of a twelve-year-old. According to her daughter, Hiruko, she is a rather high-ranking god. For some reason, she clings to Yogiri as her "daddy."



Euphemia

A half-demon girl who was enslaved by Yogiri's classmate Yuuki Tachibana. After his death, she was made into one of Sage Lain's vampires, and after her death she won the battle to become Lain's successor and is now an Origin Blood. She came to recognize Risely as her master and chose to act as her attendant.

Risley

The Sage Lain, being the highest level of vampire known as an Origin Blood, challenged Yogiri in hopes he would be able to put an end to her immortality. She died per her wishes and left behind this girl, a replica of herself modified to be her ideal. She only has a small part of Lain's memories.

Table of Contents

Cover

Characters

Chapter 1 — There Was No Way We Could Fight Them, So We Told Them Yogiri Takatou Killed Her

Chapter 2 — Maybe We Can Talk Things Through?

Chapter 3 — How Are You So Calm in This Situation?! You're Making Me Look Stupid for Panicking!

Chapter 4 — I Can Almost Physically Feel Their Hatred for Us!

Chapter 5 — Rather, Perhaps the Fact That a Beautiful Young Girl Has Yet to Appear Is Actually Relatively Comforting

Chapter 6 — There Was No Sign of Me Awakening, and Yet You Have Accomplished It So Easily?!

Chapter 7 — In Truth, I Have Awakened, Gaining Tremendous Power All at Once!

Chapter 8 — Being Seen Doing This Is Super Gross!

Chapter 9 — I Guess That Was a Bit Reckless of Me, but You Wouldn't Die from Something like That, Would You?

Chapter 10 — We're Not Gonna Get Attacked by More Weirdos, Are We?!

Chapter 11 — Interlude: The Agency Tries to Eliminate All Aliens and Otherworlders

Chapter 12 — Seeing Someone Act All High and Mighty Makes You Want to Force Them to See Their Own Weakness

Chapter 13 — My Power Is to Kill Anything by Thinking It

Chapter 14 — So He Killed the Previous Situation?

Chapter 15 — Even Though I Powered Up, I Lost It All Before Having a Chance to Show My Awakened Abilities

Chapter 16 — We Don't Plan On Killing You. Now Hand Over the Treasure

Chapter 17 — If You Have Never Tasted Defeat, Then Try and Claim Victory Here Too

Chapter 18 — I Have Done It! I Have Reunited with Sir Takatou! I Have Won!

Chapter 19 — Are You Saying the Philosopher's Stones Just Collected Themselves, and Now We're Going to Be Able to Go Home?!

Chapter 20 — That Sounds Like You Are Just Being Lazy, but I Get What You're Trying to Say

Chapter 21 — Basically, I'm Just Saying Things to Make You Think

Chapter 22 — Interlude: You're Not That Serious about This, Are You, Gramps? Fine, I'll Do Better This Time

Side Story: The Interstice

Afterword

Color Illustrations

Bonus Short Story

Bonus Textless Cover

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ACT 1

Chapter 1 — There Was No Way We Could Fight Them, So We Told Them Yogiri Takatou Killed Her

Yogiri Takatou and Tomochika Dannoura passed through the translucent barrier between areas, returning the way they came. Greeting them on the other side was a cliff facing the sea. Passing back through the barrier again, heading south, the sea vanished, replaced by a wall of clouds.

"Looks like there's some trick with this barrier," Yogiri said.

Hmm...it seems some sort of camouflage has been applied. Looking outside of the barrier from within gives a view contrary to reality. Mokomoko Dannoura, in her spirit form, investigated the transparent wall. Looking in from outside the barrier, they could see clouds and floating islands beyond the cliff. In the distance, they could see the horizon curving away from them, suggesting the world was spherical in shape.

"I guess we should wander around for a bit."

"What about the Neutral Zone?!" Tomochika exclaimed. "Where are we supposed to go?!" They had planned on visiting the city in the Neutral Zone to gather information and figure out where they would head next.

"There's nothing we can do if it's not there. For now, the best we can do is follow the cliff."

"Well...I guess we can't really go back after how we left that village..."

They had visited a village populated by those infected by the Seyla. The people there had wanted Yogiri to kill them, but he had effectively ignored them and left. Yogiri wasn't fond of the idea of turning around and meeting them again either.

For now, wait a moment. I shall ascend and get the lay of the land.

"I guess we never did that, did we?" Yogiri replied.

We believed the road would take us directly to the Neutral Zone, after all.

As Tomochika's guardian spirit, Mokomoko couldn't travel that far from

her. However, for some reason, flying up into the air didn't seem to be an issue.

"I've thought this for a while, but the rules of being a ghost are pretty flimsy, aren't they? Why is horizontal distance the only thing that matters?" asked Tomochika.

Fundamentally, it is an issue of perception! As long as I do not feel there is much distance between us, there is no issue! After saying that, Mokomoko floated up into the air, looking around for a while before coming back down.

"How was it?" Yogiri asked.

I have two things to report. First, this does not seem like a continent. That said, it is still an island of considerable size and appears to be floating in the air.

Mokomoko described what she saw. The island was shaped like an ellipse, just barely large enough to hold one of the hexagons that made up the areas of Belm. Each side of the hexagons that made up Belm were ten kilometers long, giving it a diameter of about twenty kilometers. They had heard the continent was two thousand kilometers from north to south, and four thousand from east to west, but that didn't seem to be the case.

"Huh? But we saw a huge continent when we first got here, right?!" Tomochika cried.

That was simply what we saw from within the tunnel of light. It is possible the camouflage has been put in place since then.

"Why would they do that?"

Hmm...I cannot say I understand. The people here seem to believe they live on an expansive continent. Even if disguised with these boundaries, one would expect them to see through the ruse almost immediately.

"Will we get anywhere following the cliff?" asked Yogiri.

After seeing the entirety of the island, I can say I saw a number of settlements, but none were of the scope one would expect from a nation.

"Then where did everyone go? This is supposed to be a whole continent with a bunch of countries on it."

At least, that's what they had been told before arriving in Belm. There were supposed to be four nations fighting each other here. The others in their party had been recruited and sent off to each of those four nations.

Suudoria Academy had taken their classmate, Daimon Hanakawa. Himeln had taken Luu, the girl formed from the fused Philosopher's Stones. The

Slow Life League had taken Hiruko, the god claiming to be Luu's daughter. And Momurus had taken the Enju robot that Mokomoko had been controlling. That was the explanation they had been given.

Who knows? Though it is no more than intuition, I imagine they are not actually here. After disappearing suddenly like that, it is not so hard to believe they were taken somewhere different.

"The leader of the city we were at said they threw themselves into a volcano at one point. Did you see anything like that?"

The boy, Scott, who had seemed to be the leader of the infected settlement, such as it was, had told them about the many ways they had tried to take their own lives.

Nothing at all. There was some undulation to the landscape, but nothing that would reach the level of a mountain.

"Does that mean they went off the island?"

It appears that way.

"Then as much as I don't want to admit it, maybe we should go back to the village and talk to them again after all."

They could have tried visiting the other settlements, but going back the way they came would be the fastest option.

"That's going to be super awkward, though," said Tomochika.

"It doesn't look like we have any other choice. We'll just have to suck it up and go."

And this time, it was likely Yogiri would have to force himself to grant their wish to die. He had refused them before, but it was hard to expect their help this time without giving them something in return. If they insisted, Yogiri would have to resign himself to acceding to their request.

As for my second report, the village we visited earlier has disappeared.

"Huh? What do you mean?"

As the closest settlement, there should be no way to miss it, but there are no buildings anywhere in sight.

"Either way, let's head back there."

They walked through the barrier, and Mokomoko once again ascended to investigate their surroundings. As before, the sea was to the west and land stretched as far as they could see to the east. From within the boundary, it looked very much like the continent that had been described to them. But things inside the barrier were still just as Mokomoko had seen from the other

side. The village was nowhere to be found.

"Were they attacked? But we're not that far away. We should have noticed an attack big enough to wipe out a city."

I am not too familiar with how these barriers work, but it is possible they block out all sound and shock waves.

They followed the path north, back the way they had come. The city should have been right there, but they couldn't see anything. After walking for a while, they found some people lying on the road. Noticing their approach, one of them sat up.

"Oh, you're back?" It was Scott, the boy who had spoken to them before on behalf of the city.

"What happened?!"

"We were attacked. We've been dead for a while." Used to this kind of situation, he didn't seem especially bothered.

"Looks like you're enjoying your immortality to me."

"That is upsetting to hear. Take a look around. They are all lying around with the same expressions they had when they died, aren't they? They don't even have the willpower to stand anymore." As he said, the other infected were lying motionless. They were basically living corpses. "The only reason I can still move is because my body is younger. Oh, you should probably stay back, by the way." Yogiri thought it was weird to talk from such a distance, but Scott stopped him when he tried to approach. "The area around the village looks strange, see? The whole place was actually erased, so there's a huge hole here. Grass and roots covered the hole to give us a place for the Seyla to resurrect us, but if you step on it, you'll probably fall to the bottom."

At Scott's warning, they finally noticed the bizarre nature of the once-city. The settlement had been replaced by open grassland, but looking closer, they could see there was no ground underneath the grass. Grass and roots had tied together to create a loose covering for the hole.

"Then I guess we'll talk from here," Yogiri said. "What happened?"

"Shortly after you left, someone came from Himeln. This time it was an L unit, totally different from the ordinary soldiers that normally come here."

Soldiers on Belm were referred to as "units." Divided into S, M, and L categories, the L units were the strongest of the three. In general, S units were common rank and file, M units were commanders, and L units organized and led the M units.

“They came to ask us who killed Nina. We figured they meant the M unit that you killed, that woman commanding the other soldiers. There was no way we could fight them, so we told them Yogiri Takatou killed her.”

“Hold on a sec! I guess it’s true we killed her, but she’s the one who attacked us!” replied Tomochika. “And didn’t you sell us out a bit too easily?!”

“That’s a bizarre reaction. Were we close enough that anything between us could be considered a betrayal? Of course, if Mr. Takatou had promised to kill us once and for all, things would have been different.”

“I guess he has a point.” Yogiri couldn’t really blame them. They didn’t have much of a relationship, so their behavior could hardly be called a betrayal.

“They asked where you went, so we told them you headed to the Neutral Zone. But then, you can see what they did. They just went on a rampage and destroyed the city. So if you two are back here, does that mean you killed the L unit?”

“No, we haven’t seen anyone.”

“Really? It’s a one-way road to the Neutral Zone. Maybe he was in such a frenzy he didn’t notice you.”

“Yeah, about that. There are those area boundaries, right? Things got weird when we went through it. Do you know why?”

“You were able to go through?”

“You make it sound like we shouldn’t have been able to!” Tomochika snapped.

“Is there some kind of trick to them?” asked Yogiri.

“You should need points to get through the barriers. That’s why I assumed you’d be back sooner or later, but that is unexpected.”

The people of this city were desperate to die. Yogiri had been curious why, but his group had been allowed to leave without much issue. Apparently, that was only because Scott hadn’t thought they would make it through the barrier.

“What are points?”

“You don’t honestly expect me to tell you anything more for free, do you?” It seemed he wasn’t willing to accept the possibility of them again walking away without granting his wish.

“Okay, I get it. What do you want me to do?”

“For starters, why don’t you kill everyone except for me? I’m the only one you’ll need if you want to talk.”

“Okay then, tell everyone who wants to die to gather here in front of me.” Yogiri didn’t want to go around proactively killing them. At the very least, he wanted to see them actively decide whether to live or die.

◇ ◇ ◇

In the end, everyone aside from Scott asked to be killed, about fifty in all. Dying at Yogiri’s hands would likely erase their souls. He had explained it to them, but none of them had changed their mind. None seemed like they wanted to think things through very deeply, so they might not have really considered what they were getting into.

“Thank you. As promised, I’ll help you as much as I can. You can kill me once you’re happy.” After burying his companions, Scott came back. It hadn’t taken all that long, since in this case, burying them just meant throwing them into the massive grass-covered hole. In order to avoid getting infected themselves, Yogiri and Tomochika had waited at a distance.

“Okay then, let’s get right to it,” said Yogiri. “What are points? You said you need them to get through the barrier.”

“Points are units of energy used in Belm. Moving between areas costs one point per person.”

“What happens if you don’t have any points?”

“The barrier should block your progress. *Should*, but you’re saying it didn’t stop you?”

“We made it through, but there was nothing on the other side.” Yogiri explained what they had seen on the other side of the barrier.

“I find that hard to believe, but I guess you don’t have much of a reason to lie...” From Scott’s perspective, Belm was a proper continent, and he had traveled through it by passing through the barriers before. It was hard to accept it was an island floating in the sky without any actual proof.

“How do we get points?”

“You saw them stabbing the infected with cylinders to collect energy before, right? That’s how. One of those cylinders holds a single point.”

“Huh? Then how are we supposed to get points?” They had no cylinders here. It was possible the soldiers they had killed had dropped some in the

village, but the village was now gone.

"With me here, you should be able to manage something. For now, we'll have to go try passing through the barrier ourselves."

"I guess there's not much we can accomplish by just wandering around here..." Tomochika sighed. Yogiri agreed with her. They didn't have any clues that would lead them to more Philosopher's Stones yet.

"I wonder if Luu and the others will try to come to me?"

"That would be nice. We can only walk, after all."

Grumbling, they headed south again. After walking for a short time, they came upon the barrier.

"You can see the city in the Neutral Zone from here, right?" Scott said.

"Now that you mention it..." From where they stood, they could faintly see buildings on the other side of the barrier. They had been focused on the barrier itself earlier, so they hadn't noticed what was on the other side of it.

"What do we do?"

"If I kill myself, we should be able to manage. There are three of us, so I'll only have to do it three times."

"You don't need one of those cylinder things?" Yogiri recalled the weapons the soldiers had used. A cylindrical tube had been attached to the end of each spear.

"No. If we're right beside the barrier, we should be okay."

"You really don't mind dying, do you?" Tomochika asked.

"I have no intention of taking death lightly, but we've been trying to die for a while. Naturally, we've tried killing ourselves in all sorts of ways, so you don't need to worry about it."

"Doesn't it hurt?"

"I'm used to it." Stepping up to the barrier, Scott put a hand on it. "Okay, let's get started—" He was interrupted by the sound of an explosion, causing him to freeze.

"Huh? Was that the city? Did it just explode?"

A huge pillar of fire erupted from the city in the distance, so large that even without Tomochika's superior eyesight, Yogiri could make it out clearly.

Chapter 2 — Maybe We Can Talk Things Through?

The pillar of fire continued to burn, hurling the buildings that made up the city into the air as it incinerated them. The three of them looked on dumbly at the spectacle. While they understood that what was happening was terrible, there wasn't much they could do about it.

"Uhh...that's the city in the Neutral Zone, right?" Tomochika asked Scott.

"Yes. Beyond this barrier is the Neutral Zone, and that's the only city inside it."

"Oh, maybe it's just weird since we've never been here before. Does stuff like this happen often?"

"No, it's the first time I've seen something like this. I'm pretty surprised too."

"How many Neutral Zones are there?" Yogiri asked, getting a bad feeling about this. Their current objective was to gather information. They wanted to find out about their lost companions and the whereabouts of the Sage, but if this was the only Neutral Zone, they would have lost the chance to learn anything.

"As far as I know, this is the only one. Since it's connected to the area leading off the continent, it's kept here as a place where people from any faction can teleport to."

"Then, something like that happening to the city is a pretty big deal, isn't it?"

"It looks that way. Either way, if the city is just destroyed, it can be rebuilt, but..."

"I guess we have no choice but to look for ourselves. Even if the city is gone, there should be people from each of the different nations there."

The Neutral Zone was supposed to be off-limits for fighting. It was something like a gentleman's agreement—since it was a critical piece of infrastructure as one of the few places where food from the outside world

could be brought in, no one had ever stirred up any trouble there before.

"Okay, then, so...isn't this kind of, in a roundabout way, our fault?" Tomochika asked. The L unit from Himeln had asked Scott where Yogiri and Tomochika had gone, and he had told them they were heading for the Neutral Zone, so it was likely the L unit had gone there as well.

"Seems quite likely."

"Come on, you should be more worried about this!"

"But what could we have done? I won't say we had nothing to do with it, but it's not like it's really our fault, is it?"

"Well, I guess it's the fault of the people who attacked... Oh, maybe it's those people floating over there." As usual, Tomochika's superior eyesight allowed her to see much farther than the others. Though Yogiri couldn't make anything out, she could see people floating in the air.

"What do you see?"

"There's a guy who looks like a prince and a fat woman. The woman looks like the one we saw earlier."

“So, she ran away and came back with friends, huh?” Yogiri could understand if she’d come back to get revenge, but he didn’t understand why they were attacking a random city.

“Oh, they’re looking at us now—”

As Tomochika spoke, the barrier in front of them flashed brightly. Something had rammed into it. The denizens of Belm couldn’t pass through the barriers without points. The proof was that the prince-like man Tomochika had mentioned earlier was now stuck to the other side of the barrier in front of them. He had seen Yogiri and charged thoughtlessly towards them.

“They were really far away. It’s amazing he got here so fast.” Yogiri was honestly impressed. Most of the enemies they had come across were monsters, so it was hard to know how impressive they were, but this man’s incredible speed was concrete enough that they could tell how impressive he was right away.

Now then, if this man is here searching for you, he likely possesses points of his own. Once he calms down, he will pass through to this side. That said, we can pass through without using points, so it is easy enough for us to flee. What shall we do?

That would mean leaving Scott behind, but the other two could pass through the barrier and out of the illusionary continent onto that floating island. A resident of Belm wouldn’t be able to follow them there. Basically, escaping would be incredibly easy.

“Maybe we can talk things through?”

“I’m pretty sure that’s not going to happen!”

It didn’t seem like escaping from him now would make him give up, and depending on when he caught up with them next, this guy could be a bigger problem later. Yogiri figured it was best to settle things with him here and now.

◇ ◇ ◇

Gerhardt, a prince of Himeln, and Marino, his sister Nina’s attendant, headed to the village where Nina had died. After teleporting, they arrived in the center of the region and immediately took flight.

“Marino, tell me precisely what happened.” He had gone mad with rage

before, but it seemed he had calmed down a little.

Marino explained the events leading up to Nina's death. This area was under the control of Himeln and bordered the Slow Life League. The League was making an attempt to capture this territory, so Nina and her cohort had been sent to defend it. They had been performing the routine duties of collecting points from the infected. Nina had sent her soldiers to the village as usual, but they had failed to make their usual report or return on time. Losing her temper, she went to check on them herself and found a number of the soldiers had died. It seemed they were facing off with someone who had yet to be infected. After exchanging words with the boy briefly, Nina had suddenly collapsed. Marino had panicked, immediately grabbing her and teleporting back to Himeln's home base.

"You said he wasn't associated with any of the other factions. Who exactly were they?"

"It appeared to be a boy and a girl. I do not know the details, but they were fighting our soldiers."

"Losing S units is nothing extraordinary, but..." He didn't want to believe his beloved Nina was dead. Beyond that, with her particular abilities, it was impossible to believe someone could kill her. Though she was only an M unit, she had an ability that let her dodge any attack with one hundred percent certainty. It wouldn't be enough to defeat a powerful foe, but it was enough that her dying should have been impossible. Or that was what everyone in Himeln had thought.

"I do not understand what happened to her. Lady Nina suddenly fell..."

"It's fine. Whoever did this, I won't let them die an easy death. I'll make them suffer for eternity."

Against an opponent who was capable of killing Nina in spite of her ultimate evasion skill, there was no being too careful. But still, Marino felt confident. There was no opponent who could hope to best Gerhardt.

Gerhardt dropped to the ground. The body of an infected man lay nearby, stirring at his arrival. Countless needles erupted from the ground beneath him, punching through him and lifting him into the air.

"These guys are always spaced out. You need to wake them up if you want to talk to them."

Marino had never seen Gerhardt do something like that before, but his powers were beyond counting. There was nothing he could do that would

surprise her at this point.

"There was a guy here who killed some soldiers from Himeln. Where is he?"

"How the hell should I know? Jeez..."

"I know you can feel pain. I'll keep torturing you like this until you talk."

"I'll tell you, so could you leave him alone?" A boy crouched down in the shadow of a nearby building spoke up. "The one who killed the Himeln soldiers was a boy named Yogiri Takatou. He was traveling with a girl named Tomochika Dannoura. They said they were heading to the Neutral Zone to the south."

Torturing the infected wouldn't accomplish much, and there was no guarantee that any information they squeezed out of them would be truthful. However, Marino felt like the boy's claim was accurate. There wasn't much around this area, so there weren't many other places for them to go. On top of that, there was no reason for this boy to lie to them, and the infected probably didn't have the energy to come up with a lie anyway.

"He's a little bit shorter than you. He said he came here from outside the continent. They were wearing clothes that didn't match the ones from here, so you'll recognize them right away. That's about as much as I can tell you, so please let him go."

"Is that so? It seems like you are telling the truth." The needles vanished, dropping the man back to the ground.

"You can tell if he is lying?" Marino asked.

"Yes. I can't read minds, but I can tell if someone is being truthful. Marino, we're heading to the Neutral Zone."

"Yes, sir."

Gerhardt rose back into the air and began flying south. Marino followed after him, but after traveling for a short time, Gerhardt stopped and turned around. In the next moment, the city behind them was gone. A pillar of fire erupted from the ground beneath it, incinerating everything instantly.

"Sir, you..."

"They may have been hiding somewhere inside."

"But...if they were, now we'll never know..."

"That's not a problem. I can bring anyone I kill back to life if I have to."

Marino had never heard of an ability like that, but for Gerhardt, she couldn't help but assume he was telling the truth.

“Looks like there was no one there but the infected, though. Let’s go.” Gerhardt began moving again. They reached the boundary between areas quickly, at which point Marino realized they hadn’t collected any points.

When teleporting here, they could use the points that they had accumulated at their home base, but they hadn’t brought any with them, so without collecting points themselves they wouldn’t be able to move between areas.

“Don’t worry about it. I got some points from destroying that village earlier.” Normally, one used cylinders to collect energy from those infected by the Seyla, but Gerhardt could hold those points himself.

Gerhardt placed a hand on the barrier, part of which began to shine with a multicolored light. He must have given it enough points for two people. After the two of them passed through, the barrier returned to normal. Continuing south, they quickly came upon another city. People from all four factions resided within, and the infected had been driven out. It was one of the few areas where contact with the world outside Belm could be made, and it housed about ten thousand residents.

“Searching through the entire city may take quite some time...”

“That’s not a problem.”

“Sir Gerhardt, do you perhaps possess an ability that will allow you to search the entire city at once?”

“I can just do this.” With a casual gesture from Gerhardt, the city was engulfed in flames. The inferno erupting from the ground incinerated everything as it reached into the sky. It was the same as what he had done to the village before, but this time on a much larger scale.

This wasn’t a pointless settlement full of nothing but infected. The situation in this city was a delicate balance of powers between the members of all four factions. Even as a prince of Himeln, there was no way he could get away with doing something like this without repercussions.

“A-Are you sure it was okay to do that?!”

“Are you saying we should have just gone in and asked around?”

“There were citizens of Himeln living in that city as well!”

“So what?”

Marino had thought Gerhardt had calmed down, but it was now clear something inside him had broken. Unable to think of anything but revenge, he was blind to reason.

“This will be quick.” A number of lights flew up out of the inferno and towards them. They were like the souls of people. The lights gathered in Gerhardt’s hand, where he absorbed them. He closed his eyes and concentrated. Inspecting the contents of those souls, he looked for signs of Yogiri Takatou, the boy who had killed Nina.

The inferno finally died down, and the flow of light stopped. Everyone within the city had died. Gerhardt opened his eyes.

“They weren’t here.”

“Then what do we do next?”

“If they weren’t associated with any of the four factions, they couldn’t have teleported anywhere. In that case, we’ll have to check each area one by one. That’s our only choice.”

“If we do that, we’ll be attacked by the L units of the other factions!”

“That’s fine. If they’re willing to stop watching and come at me themselves, I’ll take them down.”

The L units were beings who exceeded the norm. A fight between them would unleash unimaginable destruction, so they were typically held back as a last resort.

I need to do something... Marino thought. Yogiri Takatou would have to bear Gerhardt’s hatred. The longer it took to find him, the greater Gerhardt’s massacre would become.

She looked around. There was a chance he was still nearby. He had headed south, so if he wasn’t in the city, he should still be in the area somewhere. Using magical energy to enhance her vision, she desperately searched the area but was unable to find anything.

“Marino, look over there.”

“Y-Yes, sir!” Following Gerhardt’s instructions, she looked to the north, in the direction of the first village they had visited. There were three figures there. Two boys and a girl. Yogiri Takatou was one of them. There was no way Marino would forget the face of the one who killed Nina and her soldiers.

“There is no doubt! That boy is the one who killed Lady Nina!”

“I see.” Gerhardt disappeared. The distant barrier separating areas flashed brightly. Gerhardt must have struck it head on. As she thought, he had lost his mind. To get between areas, one had to feed points into the barrier to create a gate, and that required a small amount of time.

Marino hurried after him.

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Chapter 3 — How Are You So Calm in This Situation?! You're Making Me Look Stupid for Panicking!

Someone was stuck to the barrier above them. His luxurious clothing meant he was likely the prince Tomochika had mentioned. An enormous woman in a red dress was floating near him.

"These guys can fly?" Yogiri asked.

"M units and above typically move around by flying. It's probably to protect them from the Seyla," Scott answered. The rank and file had to wear armor that completely enclosed them since they walked on the ground.

"What are they doing?"

"It takes some time to get through the barrier. Look, that's what is supposed to happen when you move between areas."

The color of the barrier around the man began to change. A rainbow of colors mixed together to create a multicolored circle. The man and woman were then able to pass through that circle.

"What do we do, Takatou?!"

"Nothing we can do but wait and see what they do for now." Judging from the information they had so far, this man had leveled the village behind them and the city in front of them. It was possible he would attack them immediately, but for now he was just looking down at them. If he wasn't doing anything, Yogiri had no reason to attack him either.

Hmm...it appears we are being investigated. He may be using some sort of information-gathering skill.

"If all he's doing is scanning us, that's not really a problem, is it?"

"I guess not," Tomochika said. "We don't have anything like jobs or skills." That was likely why none of the factions of Belm had bothered to recruit them. Up until now, no one had ever recognized they had any particular abilities, so they had been universally underestimated. No one had

been able to figure out Yogiri's power yet.

"Marino, are you sure it's him?"

"Yes. There is no doubt."

"Okay. You do seem to be telling the truth..."

"Umm, considering how you've acted so far, I thought you would kill him right away and find out for yourself."

"I attacked the city because it would be difficult to search through the entire place myself. If he's definitely in front of me, though, there's no reason to kill him right away. That said, hmm. I guess I should make sure he can't escape."

Their surroundings suddenly transformed. The sky turned dark and the earth crimson. Countless needle-like spires erupted from the ground, and between them the earth cracked and spurted magma. The tranquil grassland they had walked through had been erased, replaced by a veritable hellscape.

"What?! What's going on?!" Tomochika frantically looked around. A deep crevice opened in the earth surrounding them, leaving them on an isolated island amid the destruction.

"Were we teleported somewhere? Doesn't seem that way." Considering how much had changed, it wouldn't be strange to learn they had been teleported. However, Yogiri now considered being teleported against his will to be an attack against him. If someone tried to teleport him somewhere, they should have ended up dead.

No, our coordinates have not changed. It is more like he has rewritten our surroundings.

"Does that mean the infected grass around us is dead?"

"That's what you're worried about? But I highly doubt it. I don't know how far this transformation spreads, but if the grass can't exist here, it was likely just pushed outside." Scott spoke like it was obvious.

"Oh, okay. I was hoping that would be good enough, and I wouldn't have to kill anymore. I'm also worried about how the transformation seems to be going through the barrier." As far as they could see, the hellish landscape continued forever. If the barrier was supposed to keep the areas separate, Yogiri would have expected it to stop the transformation as well.

"How are you so calm in this situation?!" Tomochika exclaimed. "You're making me look stupid for panicking!"

Perhaps the barrier only restricts the movement of living things. And in

the first place, what we see on the other side of the barrier is not what is actually there.

They didn't know how it worked, but the barrier projected an image to make it look like the continent was one contiguous piece of land. While they were inside the barrier, there was no way of knowing if the effects had actually spread outside of it.

"Do you think it can be turned back to normal?"

Who knows? I am not so familiar with the techniques of this world. Considering the techniques I am familiar with, defeating the user may return things to normal. Overwriting the environment is a massive undertaking, one that is perpetually contested by the world attempting to right itself.

"I guess we'll have to wait and see." The fissure surrounding them was about ten meters across, large enough that an ordinary human wouldn't be able to cross it. If things stayed like this, they'd be trapped here, but they could worry about that later. For now they had to deal with the two people floating in the sky above them.

"So, you are the one who killed Nina?" The man finally called out to Yogiri.

"Who's that?"

"Huh? Are you really choosing to play dumb?" Tomochika looked at him in shock.

"It's not like I've ever heard her name." Yogiri figured they were referring to the small girl he had killed back in the infected village, but he had no evidence of that. He had killed plenty of people since coming to Belm. He wouldn't be surprised if there was someone named Nina among them, but there was no point admitting to killing someone if he didn't know for sure.

"Oh? There would be no issue with killing peasants like you out of hand...but let's be absolutely sure about this." As the man spoke, numerous mirror-like portals appeared in the air around them. A baby lying on a bed. A young girl playing in a field. A refined young woman wearing a dress. Though they were all sorts of pictures, they all showed images that were undeniably of the same girl. They appeared to be images of her at various different points in her life. The images were large and detailed, leaving no room for error. It was definitely the girl Yogiri had killed in the village. "Her name is Nina, princess of Himeln and the younger sister of Prince Gerhardt—me! So do you remember now?!"

“What are these things?” Yogiri asked.

“Images of my memories of Nina! Judging by your response, you recognize her, don’t you?!”

“Huh? Why are there pictures of her in the bath in there?” Tomochika cringed. Though they hardly needed confirmation after what they had seen him do, it seemed this guy wasn’t a particularly upstanding individual.

“How dare you gaze upon Nina’s nakedness!”

“You’re the one who showed it to us...”

“Ha! Don’t think you can fool me! My powers allow me to glean the truth from your responses! You definitely know Nina!”

“So what? She’s the one who attacked us. I just defended myself.” Yogiri couldn’t quite tell what he was getting at. Gerhardt’s words weren’t logically connecting to each other.

“Like hell you were! Trash like you has no right to fight back against her! You should have just sat by quietly and let her kill you! Do you think you have any right to do otherwise?!”

“Uhhh...I do have the right to defend myself, right?” Yogiri turned to ask Tomochika.

“Well, sure. You can’t just sit there and let someone kill you...”

“I see. So you fail to recognize the measure of your own sin. Very well. I will explain so you can understand just how grave your crime was.”

Gerhardt began a long speech.

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They listened to Gerhardt’s stories about Nina. Stories of how beautiful she was, how proud, noble, and affectionate she was flowed on and on from the man. He continued uninterrupted. He spoke with such passion, it was like it was the only thing he could do to distract himself from his hatred of Yogiri.

“I’m starting to feel bad for this guy...” Tomochika commented.

Do not be fooled. No matter how loving a yakuza family is, it changes not the wickedness of their enterprise.

“He’s also pretty biased, don’t you think?”

Yogiri found it hard to believe that someone who murdered her own subordinates and tried to casually kill innocent civilians without a thought was a great person.

“What do you think?! Do you understand the depths of your sin?! Are you even capable of understanding?!”

“It doesn’t really matter if she was a loving saint. She tried to kill me, so I had to fight back.”

“So you don’t understand! Listen! Nina herself is justice! Anyone she attacks is thus evil! Therefore, you should have died! Can’t you understand something so simple?!”

“Come on, no matter how much you talk about Nina, I’m not going to think I did anything wrong. Can we stop with this stupid conversation already?”

At first Yogiri was a little interested in what Gerhardt had to say. Most of Yogiri’s enemies died with him not knowing anything about them since he never had a chance to really talk with them. Many died without Yogiri ever knowing why they had attacked him in the first place. If his opponent was willing to talk, then Yogiri was all for it, but a one-sided conversation like this was getting to be a bit too much. He was starting to want to wrap things up.

“I see. You think it’s stupid. You think talking about Nina is stupid...” Gerhardt finally lowered himself to the ground, meeting Yogiri’s gaze. One look was all they needed to see he wasn’t sane. He had spoken for so long that he had given the impression of being calm, but it seemed he was just barely able to keep his rage suppressed. “Let me ask you one final question. What did you do to Nina? What technique did you use?”

“That’s a good question. Even I don’t really know.” People died when he thought to kill them, but even Yogiri didn’t know how that was accomplished.

“It seems you are not sure either.” Yogiri didn’t know what Gerhardt’s powers were, but it seemed he was able to tell something just from Yogiri’s response. “In that case, you may die. I’ll bring you back to life and kill you again and again for all eternity.”

Gerhardt’s vague desire to kill became more overt, filling the space around Yogiri. As if in response to it, lightning began to arc across the blackened sky, and the air itself began to shake. The earth split anew, spewing forth vents of flame, and the crevice surrounding them grew wider. It was like the entire world had turned to attack him. Everything within sight obeyed Gerhardt’s will, and everything was conspiring to take Yogiri’s life.

The woman floating in the air was struck by lightning, falling from the sky. In this state, Gerhardt didn't seem to care about even his own companions. The woman fell into a crevice in the earth, but Gerhardt didn't even seem to notice.

Raising his palm towards them, Yogiri felt something whiz by. Gerhardt must have launched something towards them. Yogiri felt no killing intent from it, so he hadn't been able to react. But Scott was now gone.

"It would be a problem if you got infected and became immortal now."

If he killed Scott, he would just be revived on the spot, so instead he had sent him flying off into the distance. Of course, being sent flying at that speed would be enough to kill anyone, but as long as most of his body remained, he'd revive wherever he landed, and so would not be an issue.

Gerhardt then turned his hand towards Tomochika.

"I thought you were upset with *me*," Yogiri said.

"Of course I must inflict the same pain of losing a loved one on you that you inflicted on me."

"Uhh, we're not really like that..." Tomochika spoke up.

"There is no use in playing dumb. I can see through any—"

"Well, that's going to be an issue."

Gerhardt collapsed. He had tried to kill Tomochika, so Yogiri had killed him.

"Huh? Is that all?"

A rather common ending for us.

"If that wasn't the end, we'd be in trouble."

The chaotic world raging around them began to settle, but that was it. The sky remained dark, the earth remained red, and the crevices and ravines that had opened up made no move to close.

"You said that if he died, things would go back to normal, didn't you?" Yogiri asked.

I also told you I was unfamiliar with his powers, did I not?

"Uh...this is bad, isn't it?" Tomochika asked. "We can't get out of here anymore." The crevice surrounding them had expanded further and was now almost twenty meters across. Escaping under their own power would be virtually impossible.

Hmm...if it had still been ten meters, we could have removed your limiter, and you could have leaped across...

“Removed my *what*? I’m pretty sure I’d be setting world records with a jump like that!”

“Scott was thrown really far away, but he’ll come back eventually, right?” Yogiri suggested.

“And what difference does it make if he does?”

“Maybe he can find some boards or something we can use as a bridge.”

“You think such a convenient thing would just be lying around?”

“Maybe we can figure something out with what’s in our backpack.”

“There’s a rope in there, right? If we tie something heavy to one end, we might be able to fasten it to something on the other side...”

“Gerhardt!” As Yogiri and Tomochika discussed how they would get out of the situation, a third person called out. Turning to look, they found a young girl kneeling at Gerhardt’s fallen body.

“Huh? Where did she come from?” Yogiri asked.

She seems to have appeared out of thin air...

“This is just a guess, but...doesn’t she seem like a god?” Yogiri was reminded of all the gods they had met so far in this world.

Chapter 4 — I Can Almost Physically Feel Their Hatred for Us!

“Gerhardt! What happened?!” The girl was shaking Gerhardt’s body. Of course, he gave no response.

“It’s kind of annoying that more people are showing up while we’re stuck here,” Yogiri commented.

“More importantly, where did she come from?” Tomochika asked.

“We’ve met plenty of people who just appeared out of thin air, haven’t we?”

The ground around them had been carved into an island ten meters across. Though they were trapped there, other people were starting to show up.

“This girl is a god, right?” Tomochika asked, turning to Mokomoko.

Indeed, she has a divine quality about her, though the definition of “god” is fairly broad.

“I always thought gods would be more vague and indistinct beings, but all the gods we’ve seen so far look like humans, don’t they?”

Once again, there are gods of all kinds. There are those who appear as animals, those who have indeterminate forms, those who have no form, and those who are absurdly large. However, those who interact with humans often have human forms. Some are born from humans, others from the thoughts and feelings of humanity. Still others simply take an interest in humanity and thus change themselves to match our expectations. There are as many such reasons as there are gods.

“Uhh...are you sure we should be talking so casually? Don’t you think she’ll attack us?”

“She probably considers us to be less than garbage and doesn’t even notice we’re here.”

Tomochika seemed worried, but the girl had yet to show an interest in anything but Gerhardt. However, it was possible she would realize Yogiri was the one who had killed him sooner or later.

“I don’t expect you to lose or anything, but at this rate more enemies will start showing up...”

“Honestly, I feel kind of stuck. There’s nothing we can do if we get trapped here. Getting out will be difficult with just the two of us. It would be nice if we had some other people with us,” Yogiri replied. He could kill or destroy obstacles in their path, but there wasn’t anything he could do about a hole in the ground.

“This world... It’s a reflection of your grief and despair, isn’t it, Gerhardt?! This won’t do! This place doesn’t suit you!”

As the girl screamed, the world began to transform again. The hellish scenery was bathed in light. The dark sky became a brilliant blue, and the rugged landscape turned flat and even. The red earth was blanketed in grass and flowers, and gentle music began to fill the air. The crevice keeping Yogiri and Tomochika trapped closed, freeing them.

“Problem solved, I guess?”

“Is it?” Tomochika asked. “The plants don’t seem to be infected by the Seyla, but we still don’t know what’s up with the continent around us.”

“True. I guess we still don’t have any idea of where to go. But for now, we should probably get away from her, right?”

“Good idea!”

They slowly put some distance between themselves and the girl still clinging to Gerhardt. As expected, she paid them no mind, doing nothing but wailing over his body. However, Yogiri figured it wouldn’t be that easy to escape. He didn’t have any proof, but he suspected there was going to be more to it.

“Now, now, now. I can’t let you just get away with this.”

“There’s another one!” Tomochika exclaimed as an old man appeared in front of them, tall, thin, and wearing a white robe. His long, white hair and beard gave him a stereotypically elderly look.

Yogiri and Tomochika stopped, deciding it was best not to ignore him.

“Mokomoko, is he a god too?”

I am attempting to hide myself as best I can, so I would appreciate it if you did not speak to me at the moment. One wrong move and his divinity could force me to move on to the next life.

Yogiri had thought he seemed more god-like than the girl before, and apparently, his first impression was correct. “I feel like I’m repeating myself,

but we're looking for our friends, so we don't have time to stick around and talk with you."

"Gerhardt was my beloved child. I simply cannot let you walk away unpunished."

"This all started because he attacked me out of nowhere."

"Hm. True. But even among humans, you understand that one cannot bring harm upon royalty and escape the consequences, yes? Even if the royal is the one at fault. As ordinary peasants, your type should quietly accept your deaths."

In undeveloped societies, the authority of the king was absolute, and if he decided that white was now black, that's just how it would be. However, that was only true if those of lower social standing had no means of fighting back. This didn't apply to Yogiri, of course. He had no reason to let someone kill him.

"I guess there's no way we're going to come to an understanding here, but at least you're willing to talk."

"To a degree, I suppose. I was once a human like you, after all. Some faint sense of human emotion still lingers within me." He appeared to be a god born from humanity, like Mokomoko had described earlier. He looked like some kind of hermit to Yogiri.

"Does that girl back there not have those emotions? She didn't notice us."

"I suppose not. It is similar to how you would fail to notice ants walking around your feet."

"Ants? I feel like that's going too far. We're not so small that she wouldn't be able to see us."

"Gods like us perceive based on the weight of your being. Your being is so light that without paying careful attention, we would fail to notice you. I spend a great deal of time thinking about ants like you, so you could consider me something of an entomologist."

If what this old guy was saying was true, then the gods Yogiri had met so far had all been those who took an interest in humans.

"Can I ask who you are and what's going on here?" Yogiri replied.

"Very well. If you wish for conversation as your final gift, I do not mind."

"By 'final gift,' do you mean you're going to kill us?"

"As unfortunate as it is for you, I am afraid it must be done. That cannot be argued with."

“But not yet, right? It’ll be a problem if you try to kill us in the middle of our conversation.”

“I said I would give you the gift of a conversation, so of course I will not interrupt it. I will wait for our discussion to come to an end. That said, I will not appreciate it if you extend the conversation at length just to spare your own lives, so if it becomes too long, I will have to cut it short.”

“Okay, then. Who was that Gerhardt guy?” Yogiri began. “Shouldn’t he be an ant like the rest of us?”

“Perhaps from your perspective he looks similar to you, but from ours he is a being on an entirely different level. If you are like ants, he is something more akin to a kitten. Anyone would be sad to see their pet kitten die, don’t you think?”

“Yeah, that makes sense, I guess.”

“Huh? You’re accepting that explanation?” said Tomochika.

“I wouldn’t say I accept it, but it makes sense if that’s how they feel about it.”

“Hmm. He did seem to be really strong, but he didn’t look all that different... Wait, where did *they* all come from?!” Tomochika blurted out in surprise, turning around to look at Gerhardt.

Yogiri turned to look as well and saw a number of people standing around the fallen man. Including the girl who had appeared first, there were now eleven of them. Most looked human, but there was also a skeleton and some bipedal animal types among them. They must have all been different kinds of gods.

“He seems way too popular for being a kitten!”

“This world is within the Battlesong field. The class granted to him by the System was ‘The Strongest Warrior Raised by the Gods.’ Thanks to that, all sorts of gods came to dabble in his affairs.”

“Isn’t that kind of strange for a class?!”

“Who knows? He was born with it, but I cannot say I understand the causal relationship there. In any case, he was as a beloved child to us, so we granted him skills, authority, and divine instruments that surpassed the System itself. We raised him like true royalty.”

“Don’t you think it’s weird someone like him could die?”

“Hmm. From my perspective, I must say things like this happen. I cannot say it is impossible for a kitten to be killed by ants, and this is hardly the first

time he has died." This old man must have been so casual with them because he thought Gerhardt could be brought back to life.

"If you can revive him, then there's no problem leaving us alone, right?" Though Yogiri knew there was no chance Gerhardt could be brought back to life, he was just trying to get through the current situation.

"No, that will not do at all. If our adorable kitten was slain by fleas, the first order of business should be to exterminate them, don't you think? There is no meaning to bringing him back to life if he will die again immediately after."

"Why do I feel like going from ant to flea is a demotion?" Tomochika complained.

"Hey, aren't you worried that I might have some kind of power? I killed someone incredibly strong, right?"

"My, my. At first glance, you appear to be a powerless human. You do seem possessed by some kind of spirit, but it does not seem that potent."

Despite being clearly noticed, Mokomoko remained silent. However, it seemed the old man couldn't see anything else in them. Even being a god, he couldn't recognize Yogiri's special abilities. It seemed all of the gods they had met in this world were the same way, with none of them realizing who Yogiri was. The sole exception was Kouryu, who seemed to know something about him.

"In that case, I'm hardly a suspect. And if I'm just an ordinary human, there's no point killing me, right?"

"You may be unrelated, but we cannot be too careful. When exterminating pests, you do not aim at one individual species of insect at a time, do you?"

It seemed this old man was just like all the other gods they had met. He was absolutely sure that mere humans couldn't hope to harm him. Even if he believed Yogiri had been able to kill Gerhardt, he had no doubt that whatever it was would fail to harm him.

"Now then, is that all you wished to ask? I have other matters to take care of as well."

Suddenly, they were surrounded. The twelve gods had formed a circle around them.

"Whoa...I can almost physically feel their hatred for us!" Tomochika exclaimed.

Despite being gods, they didn't seem to be especially detached from the

human experience. Their emotions were clear on their faces. Though it seemed like they could attack at any moment, they weren't about to break the old man's promise.

"Is there anything you wanted to ask, Dannoura?" Yogiri offered.

"Huh? Me? Uhh, not especially. I don't know what I could even ask them."

"I figured as much. Oh, actually, where did you guys come from? Were you in this world somewhere?"

"No, we were outside of it," the old man answered.

"And you can come and go as you please?"

"Quite easily."

"Can you take us to another world, then?"

"That would be impossible. This world is rather minuscule, so bringing things out of it is a pain."

"Oh. I thought if you were gods you could do whatever you wanted." If they could move between worlds, Yogiri thought they might be able to take him and Tomochika back home, but apparently not. Then again, even if they could take them out of this world, there was no guarantee they would send them to the right place if he tried to force them. He couldn't ask someone he didn't trust to teleport him.

"Last question. How do you plan on killing us?"

"I am only here out of a sense of obligation, but the others are quite furious at you. I imagine you will be repeatedly killed and returned to life so that you might suffer for all time."

"So the same as Gerhardt, then. Okay, that's all."

"In that case, my friends, let us make this first come, first served."

At the old man's declaration, killing intent exploded outwards from the gods. From Yogiri's perspective, it was like everything had gone pitch black. A moment later, it had dissipated. The gods encircling them had all collapsed, lying motionless on the ground.

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“Were they really gods? They all seemed pretty stupid.” Yogiri couldn’t help but feel exasperated by how easily the strangers had waltzed into their own deaths.

“I feel it’s pretty dangerous to think this way, but despite how strong they were, they died just as easily as everyone else, didn’t they? Not that I wanted a proper fight or anything.” Tomochika was starting to seem pretty worn out by it as well.

Indeed. I can understand why you would think that, but they truly did possess immense power. I have ignored it until now, but...just who are you, young man?

“You ask that *now*?!” Tomochika shouted.

“I don’t really know myself. I’ve had this power since I was born.”

“Well, it looks like all our enemies are dead, so what do we do now?” Tomochika asked. “Without Scott here, we can’t get through the barrier.” They needed points to get through, so they had hoped to get some from Scott.

“I guess we’ll have to go look for him,” Yogiri said.

“We didn’t move anywhere, did we?” Tomochika asked.

Yogiri looked around. The world had gone back to normal. The only difference was that the infected grass was still missing. It must have moved somewhere else to escape the world being overwritten.

“Oh, maybe that Gerhardt guy had points?” Tomochika suggested. “He used some to get through the barrier, so maybe he has leftovers.”

“Okay, let’s try searching him.”

They turned back to investigate Gerhardt’s body.

Chapter 5 — Rather, Perhaps the Fact That a Beautiful Young Girl Has Yet to Appear Is Actually Relatively Comforting

“Waking up and immediately commenting on the unfamiliar ceiling is ordinary enough, but I have not spent enough time staring at ceilings to know if this one is familiar or not...”

Hanakawa awoke, staring up at the ceiling above him in a daze, but having never put much thought into the ceiling above him before, he couldn’t tell if much was different this time. However, he should have been somewhere in Suudoria Academy on the eastern continent.

“I sure hope this is not the kind of situation where after sleeping for an entire day, the intense training begins immediately again...”

He was lying on a clean bed. He had no memory of what had happened after he’d survived his absurd training session, so he guessed that he had passed out from the exertion.

The exercise had been in the outdoor training grounds, so Ingrid, the second-year student at the academy in charge of his training, must have carried him here. The clothes he had worn during the exercise were in tatters, but he was now wearing something like a military uniform. It didn’t seem he had been thrown out for being useless yet, so it looked like the training would continue until he became useful. He didn’t mind if it made him stronger, but he had little hope of that happening. At this rate, his life would turn brutally difficult for no reason.

“I suppose I should start by healing myself.”

After running around so desperately, his body hurt all over. For some reason, he couldn’t heal fatigue, but he could at least deal with the pain in his muscles.

He sat up and looked around. He was in a small room furnished with a simple bed, a desk, and a bookshelf.

“I would have hoped to awaken in some sort of infirmary with a beautiful nurse at my side or perhaps a girl sleeping nearby. No, I have learned better than that. Even when attractive young women appear around me, things do not turn out well, so having expectations like that will only hurt me. Rather, perhaps the fact that a beautiful young girl has yet to appear is actually relatively comforting, is it not?”

It was a room for one person, and one that seemed useful for little more than sleeping. It felt like a single room in a cheap hotel or dormitory. Naturally, he was alone, with no young ladies there to nurse him back to health.

“Hmm...it appears this place has a rather heavy Japanese influence.”

The room’s furnishings looked like they had been lifted right out of Japan, but that wasn’t especially strange. There were plenty of things that had made it to this world from Japan, people who could replicate the technology used in modern Japan, and those who had the power to bring things here from other worlds.

“Now then. I suppose there is no point in recklessly moving about.”

It was possible this would be one of his few opportunities to quietly think things through on his own. He began to contemplate what his next move should be.

“What to do next... First, I suppose I would like to secure my safety. In that case, I should either obtain power sufficient to survive easily in this world, or return to my own. Yes, returning is the only option!”

When he had first been transported to this world, he had managed to pull through the conflict between the Heroes and the Demon Lord. However in this world, that war was tiny in scale. Since his second time being summoned to this world, he had met numerous unimaginably powerful beings. If he became stronger, that would only invite even stronger beings to appear before him. In short, no matter how strong he became, he would never be safe here.

“If a god or something were to appear, there would be nothing I could do. It is like I am balanced on a tightrope. Only a little wind is all it would take to send me tumbling. I cannot afford to dream of being pampered by a harem of otherworld girls any longer.”

If he hid in some rural area back home, his healing abilities could make him a local hero, and he could live in relative safety. But there was no telling what would happen in this world. After everything he had been through, he

couldn't bring himself to be optimistic anymore.

"But as far as returning to my own world, I have no connections or information to aid me. It appears I must reunite with Sir Takatou after all! Though he seemed quite terrifying at first, despite his behavior, he appears to be quite fond of people. If I were to stick by his side, I am sure he would not abandon me! Or so I would like to believe, but I cannot help feeling a bit unsure. I can easily see him cutting me off for a rational reason, and Tomochika seems unlikely to act like a true heroine and stand up for me. But regardless! If I was truly about to die, surely they would protect me...or maybe they would not...but sticking by their side seems the best way of getting home!"

With no other leads, making use of Yogiri seemed like the surest way of getting back to Japan.

"But if I wish to reunite with him, I will need to both discover his current location and secure a method of transporting myself there. I suppose I will need to investigate this academy further."

Hanakawa had been sent off to train the moment he arrived at Suudoria Academy. He had been given a rough explanation of how things worked on Belm, but he didn't really know anything about the academy itself.

There was nothing he'd learn by sitting in this room, so he made his way outside. A long, bare hallway stretched to his left and right, lined on the opposite wall with windows. Behind him was a wall lined with doors similar to the one he had just exited from. Hanakawa stepped up to the nearest window and looked outside. He was quite high up. A rather modern-looking cityscape was spread out in front of him.

"Perhaps...this is something like a college town?" Dorm-like buildings and sports fields dotted the city. "That would make this a dormitory then. Does that make this my assigned room?" Hanakawa turned back around and looked at the door. It had a plate on it with the number "123111107."

"That number seems unnecessarily large!"

"That's because we have a lot of students here. And the first few digits are the building number, I think?"

Hanakawa turned to the voice to see a blond, blue-eyed young man standing beside him. He was wearing the same uniform as Hanakawa, but it fit him so well that Hanakawa couldn't help but feel inherently inferior.

"Err...uhh..."

“I’m Van, a first-year student like you. You don’t have to be so formal.”

“Uh, well. Are you not older than I, Sir Van?”

“Oh, yeah, the year levels here are determined by your unit type, not your age.”

“Ah, is that how it works?”

“Yep.” He seemed obviously stronger than Hanakawa, but the gap apparently wasn’t as great as it was between him and Ingrid. Hanakawa felt surprisingly at ease despite speaking with this rather good-looking guy.

“My countless experiences in battle lead me to believe you are not particularly weak, but if you are a first-year student, that must mean we are on a similar level!” Hanakawa stepped forward and patted Van on the shoulder. “My name is Daimon Hanakawa! As fellow first-years, I hope we can get along!”

“Yeah. By the way, Hanakawa, are you okay? You look worried about something.”

“True, I am concerned about a number of things, but I am impressed you were able to notice.” Having just stepped out of his room for the first time, it was natural he would look a little bewildered, but he didn’t think he gave off such a disturbed impression.

“I try to help all kinds of people, so I’ve gotten pretty good at figuring out when others are in trouble.”

“Oh-ho, that is quite impressive!”

“Yeah. So, if you need help with anything, you can ask me anytime.”

“If I need help? Well, it is difficult to say succinctly...” He couldn’t just say he was trying to get back to his home world to someone he was meeting for the first time. It may have been best to start with asking how he could get out of the academy and search for Yogiri, but he had been brought here because he’d been drafted. Whether it was possible or not for him to just walk away from the academy, he couldn’t plainly say to another student that he wanted to leave.

“Ah, well. Are you much invested in this academy, Sir Van?”

“Not really. I didn’t care where I went, so I just picked one faction at random.”

“In that case, do you perhaps know how one might leave? Not that I am planning to! I am simply curious, is all!”

The continent was divided into hexagonal areas, and there were limits on

moving between them. He had heard you couldn't just pass through, but he didn't know specifically what the limits were.

"Oh, you want to leave? Did you want to quit the academy?"

"Uhh...I cannot say it is something I have not considered or that I do not have a vague desire to explore the option..." Unable to simply nod, he tried to be as vague as possible, gauging Van's reaction.

"Ha ha, no need to be so hesitant. I'm not going to get mad at you or anything. But I wouldn't say that to our upperclassmen. They're really trying hard for the future of the academy. They'd be upset about losing a useful pawn."

"I see. Well, I find it hard to believe someone like myself disappearing would have much of an impact."

"So, a way out, huh? That's a bit difficult. The home base is surrounded by walls, so there's no exit."

"Then how does one come and go? I cannot imagine everyone simply remains trapped inside."

"They teleport. L units, which are third-year students here, have the authority to teleport people around."

"So it is impossible to leave, then?!"

"Not at all. From what I've said so far, there are a few ways you could go about doing it. First of all, you could force your way out. You could climb over the walls or break through them. The walls are made of metal that is dozens of meters thick and is reinforced with magic and constantly under watch, but it's not impossible. You could probably find a way."

"Ah, so no matter how hard I try, there is nothing I can do."

"You can also try leaving through the proper means. If you were strong enough to be deployed to the field, you could be sent to the front lines as a soldier."

"That...seems like it would take a considerable amount of time."

"Right? You don't seem like you have much promise as a soldier, so it would probably take a few years for you to get anywhere like that."

"Ha ha ha. If I wait that long, Sir Takatou will have long since made it back home..." Hanakawa muttered, hanging his head. The main reason he wanted to escape so quickly was because the training seemed like it would kill him, so engaging in that training to escape defeated the purpose.

"Hmm. I really want to help you, but it'll just cause more problems if I

take you out. Oh! How about I look for another first-year who can get you out of here?"

"Sure...but did you not say that first-years are unable to teleport?"

"Yes, but there are plenty of strong people among them. There might be someone who could get you out."

"But are there any who would be willing to disobey the rules of the Academy to do so?"

"That's where negotiations come in. Anyways, we might as well go take a look."

"Go? Where?"

"To the cafeteria. That's where most people go when they have nothing to do. This dorm is for the first-years, so you'll probably only find them there. That means you can talk about trying to get out without getting yelled at."

Van started walking, so Hanakawa had little recourse but to follow him.

Chapter 6 — There Was No Sign of Me Awakening, and Yet You Have Accomplished It So Easily?!

“This is a rather ordinary elevator.”

Following Van down the hallway, they came upon an automatic door that slid open quietly. Above the door was an array of numbers, with a light moving to indicate which floor the elevator was currently on.

“Was there something similar in your home world?” Van asked.

“Not merely similar, but effectively exactly the same. That said, did I ever mention I was from another world?”

“Most Sage candidates who come from outside the continent are summoned from other worlds.”

“Oh? While it is true I am a Sage candidate and have not been making much effort to hide it, does your ability to perceive that fact mean you have recognized the massive latent potential within me?” Van seemed pretty strong and had a mysterious air about him. Hanakawa thought he may have seen through to his own hidden potential.

“Ah ha ha, you’ve got no potential at all.”

“How flippantly you say something so tragic!”

“Sage candidates are marked when they are summoned, so I can tell you were summoned by Sion at a glance.”

“Is that someone anyone can see?”

“Anyone who knows how Battlesong works could figure it out. Well, I guess not even all the Sages understand it that well.”

“Err, you refer to Sages awfully blithely. Are you perhaps acquainted with one?” They had come to this continent in search of a Sage. If he could figure out where that Sage was, he might be able to use that information as leverage when he reunited with Yogiri.

“Yeah. I’m a Sage too, after all.”

“What?!” Hanakawa was shocked to his core. He had never expected to run into a Sage in a place like this. But now that he thought about it, the name Van did sound familiar.

I feel like I heard that name when Yogiri was asking the representative of the Belm Continental Conference about the Sage. But wait, is this not extremely dangerous?! Sir Takatou has slain numerous Sages, so if I am recognized as his companion, will that not make me their enemy?!

“Ha ha ha, come on, that’s an overreaction. But I guess the Sages are a pretty willful bunch. Did they do something to you before you made it here? Don’t worry, I was serious when I said I wanted to help you. I’m not going to hurt you, and I really do want to help you get out of here.”

“Ah...how do I say this? You seem much better than Sage Yoshifumi...”

“Yoshifumi, huh? I can’t say I appreciate being compared to him.” Van’s graceful expression twisted slightly. Though he seemed generally aloof, it seemed Hanakawa had seriously upset him.

“M-My apologies! I did not intend to bring up any poor memories!”

“Don’t worry about it.”

“Ummm, if you are a Sage, Sir Van, why is it that you are a student at this school? I was under the impression you were in charge of this continent.”

“I am, but that just means I have to fight off any Aggressors that appear. I can do whatever I want besides that. So it’s no problem for me to be a student here, right?”

It seemed the Sages all had different ways of interacting with society. Some ruled as emperors, others controlled things like puppet masters from the shadows, while still others were students at schools. They didn’t seem much like a cohesive group.

“And if you are a Sage, I thought you would be immensely strong. Why is it that you are only a first-year student?”

“Grade level isn’t necessarily determined by strength alone, though the third-years are certainly super strong.” Van had never said he wasn’t strong. Well aware of his own strength, he spoke like it was obvious.

“Umm. If you are a Sage, could you not use your powers to get me out of here?”

“Hmm. That would be difficult. First of all, I’m still just a first-year here, so I don’t have the authority to get you out. If I sent you out of here despite that, I’d get in big trouble. You might think ‘who cares,’ but I’m trying to

enjoy my school life. I don't want to threaten my position here."

"I see. Yet the fact you are attempting to help me escape means you must be a rather good person!" Technically, Van was just trying to push that crime onto someone else, so it raised some doubts about just how good a person he really was, but Hanakawa decided not to press the issue.

"Thanks. I don't mind if you want to keep praising me, but you might want to wait until you actually get out of here. Okay, we've made it to the first floor."

The softly humming elevator went silent, and the door slid open. After a short walk, they came upon a large hall filled with tables. It looked like a cafeteria. Perhaps it was noon, as the room was packed with students.

"Why don't we get something to eat? If you haven't eaten anything since this morning, I bet you're hungry. It's my treat."

"While I would be quite grateful, how exactly does one pay here?"

"The academy has its own credits. They're tied to your student ID, so there isn't any physical currency. When you want to buy something, you just show your ID."

"I see. That is unexpectedly high-tech. Hm...does that not mean I am penniless?" Though he had valuables in his item box, if he couldn't exchange them for money, he had nothing.

"You should have gotten some credits when you were admitted to the academy. Try looking at your ID."

"Did I get anything like that?" Hanakawa checked his pocket, where he found a card. The card showed his name, face, and how much money he currently had: 10,000 credits.

"Aha. How does one procure more credits?"

"You'll get enough to survive on every day for free. If you want to live a bit more luxuriously, you can get bonuses from scoring well in training and exams or from fighting members of the other factions."

"I see. Things do not sound so bad here after all...though being forced into that life-threatening training is kind of a problem!"

"Oh, that's what you don't like? Getting strong enough to meet Ingrid's expectations should be pretty easy."

"There you go again. You sound like a protagonist totally unaware of how powerful he truly is, you know? Like you think anyone could do something so incredibly difficult."

“No, I’m serious. It’s really easy. Like that.”

“‘Like that’? Did you do something?”

“I removed your level cap and gave you five hundred more levels. That should be enough to reach the minimum strength needed for a first year student.”

“Huh? There is no way it would be so easy...but you did?!” Hanakawa checked his stats, not really believing Van, but he immediately saw he had gained the Limit Break skill and his level had increased to 599. “How is this possible?!”

“We can’t just talk in the doorway. Let’s sit down.”

The two of them sat at an empty table. There was a device at the table for ordering food, which Van used to place an order without asking for Hanakawa’s input.

“What is going on here?! Despite being so close to death, there was no sign of me awakening, and yet you have accomplished it so easily?!”

“Ah ha ha, I guess being close to death didn’t help,” Van laughed innocently. There was no spite in his voice, but the way he brushed off Hanakawa’s near-death experience rubbed him the wrong way.

“No matter. Is this some sort of unique ability you possess, Sir Van?”

“Nope. Any Sage who can use Battlesong can do the same thing, I bet. Sages are the ones who install the Battlesong System on people in the first place, right? We can change the settings or add functions to a degree.”

“What?! Could we not have been granted even greater powers as Sage candidates, then?!”

“That depends on what Sion is planning. Like you said earlier, there are times when being pushed to the edge can force you to awaken. Powers you gain from doing that are a lot stronger than what I could give you.”

“B-By the way, could you perhaps make me even stronger?”

“Ha ha ha, you’re being awfully greedy, don’t you think? I appreciate your honesty, though. There’s a limit to what I can do here, but what exactly are you looking for?”

“I am quite content with the extent of my healing ability, but am totally lacking in offensive capabilities. I would like to improve my capacity in that regard, if possible.”

“I see. That’s pretty tough as a Healer. How about a job change?”

“Oh! Is that possible?!”

“Yep. Changing you to a completely different job is tough, but...ah, what about Monk? That’s a higher ranked version of the Healer class. Do you want to try it?”

“Ohhh! That class is like a warrior monk, no? Will my combat ability improve?!”

“Something like that. You’ll be able to learn close-combat skills, and you’ll get a bonus when using claws, spears, and staves. You’ll also be able to focus your will to improve your stats and launch balls of spirit as projectiles, so you’ll be able to fight at range too. Your abilities as a Healer won’t change, so I’m pretty sure it’s a straight upgrade.”

“Then I would absolutely like to accept...but wait, is there some kind of side effect I need to be made aware of? I have met all sorts of terrible fates since coming to this world, so I cannot help but feel there must be some sort of strings attached!”

“A change like this should be no risk for you. I can even change you back easily if you don’t like it.”

“I-Is that so? That said, you have already increased my level, so it seems late to be complaining! Very well! Please change my job!”

“Done!”

“That was too fast!”

“I told you it was super easy.”

Hanakawa checked his stats again. His Class had changed to Monk, and his level was still 599. He had gained the skills Close Combat, Spiritual Refinement, Spirit Projectiles, Insight, Claw Mastery, Spear Mastery, and Staff Mastery.

“Ohhhh! All of this at once!”

“You should try them out. The more you use your skills, the stronger they’ll become, and you can even unlock new ones.”

“I truly thought there was no hope for me to grow any further. I must admit I feel deeply moved. Perhaps I will be able to make it here after all...” Hanakawa’s determination to escape was starting to waver. Though he was afraid of training that would threaten his life, if he could make it through that training effortlessly, life here might be rather peaceful.

“Yes, well, I don’t know exactly how well you’ll manage. You’re only mediocre now. You’re just a little bit above the lowest rank, so don’t get too ahead of yourself.” Earlier, Van had said it would take years for Hanakawa to

gain any useful amount of strength. If it would still take years despite Van's help, he couldn't afford to get complacent.

"I shall take that under serious consideration. Suddenly exerting my new powers will only result in me receiving a harsher backlash. I will endeavor to be as humble as possible."

"So, what now? If you want to learn how to use those powers, I can help with that."

"Urgh...that is also something I am concerned about. However, for now I should prioritize attempting to escape. If I fail at that, then perhaps staying here is a viable option..."

"Got it. We'll try that as best we can, then. That said, I don't think you'll be able to stay here if you fail at escaping either, so I'll leave the decision of when to give up on that plan in your hands."

"That is true. If escape involves destructive activity, I cannot imagine I will elude punishment if I fail. So, what should I do next?"

"There are a lot of people here. I was thinking of trying to find someone who could help."

"Is attempting to leave without permission such a grave crime?"

"Yeah, you'll get the death penalty."

"You say that so lightly. If the punishment is death, will it be so easy to find someone who is willing to help?"

"Don't worry. If we find someone useful, we can just brainwash them."

Ah, this guy is actually extremely dangerous. Hanakawa felt a chill run down his spine at how naturally Van had proposed that. Judging by his behavior up until now, it seemed he really wanted to help Hanakawa, but there was no telling how long that would last. It wouldn't be strange if he suddenly turned on him. *However, I have no option but to rely on him for now...*

There was nothing Hanakawa would be able to do alone. No matter how dangerous Van was, he had no option but to suck it up and stick with him.

Chapter 7 — In Truth, I Have Awakened, Gaining Tremendous Power All at Once!

As the food they had ordered arrived, Hanakawa and Van continued their discussion while eating.

"So, what kind of person are we looking for, precisely?" Hanakawa asked.

"Hmm. Someone strong enough to destroy the city's walls or who can move around ignoring the rules of the continent, I guess."

"Are you aware of anyone capable of such things?"

"Nope. That's why we have to search."

"Could you not accomplish that with your Sage Power or something?"

"It's not like I can do *anything*. But I can tell what powers someone has if I look at them, so let's take a look around."

"In short, we have no choice but to search one individual at a time?"

"I doubt we'll find anyone that quickly, so we might as well take it easy."

"Very well. That means you can tell whether there is someone incredible here by merely looking around, yes?"

Hanakawa scanned the cafeteria. They were in a dorm built for the first-year students, so there were almost no members of the upper classes there. There were plenty of students eating lunch, but he couldn't gauge how strong they were at a glance.

"Hmm...now that I think about it, I do possess the Insight skill now, do I not?"

"If they're trying to keep their abilities hidden, I doubt you'll see much with Insight if you have no experience using it."

"You mean I will not be able to tell?"

Van pointed. "Try looking over there."

"Okay?"

"That's where people pretending to be dropouts like to hang out. For some reason, people trying to hide their talents to avoid getting into trouble gather in that corner."

“Aha. Those who wish to avoid garnering attention end up all gravitating to the same place.”

“Go ahead and pick any of them, and I’ll take a look.”

“Would it not be easier for you to select a target on your own?”

“Come on, you can at least do that much work.”

“Hmm...very well. I suppose I cannot ask you to do everything for me. How about that young man?” Without any clues, Hanakawa subtly pointed at a random boy sitting in the corner.

“Let’s take a look. It seems he has the Infinite Magic trait, so he can use as much magic as he wants.”

“Oh! Does that not make him quite powerful?”

“It’s a pretty common trait in this school, so it’s not especially strong.”

“How about that guy?”

“He’s good at talking fast, so it looks like he has the High Speed Incantation trait.”

“That does not sound especially strong, does it?”

“Right. There are plenty of people here who can shorten, skip, or just cast without using incantations at all.”

“Then how about that girl?”

“She’s a Saint. She fled to this continent after being exiled as a false prophet. I doubt she’d go back even if they asked her to now. She can use all types of magic, but again, that’s not particularly rare here.”

“What about that man?”

“He has infinite growth and levels up as he walks. But now that you have the Limit Break skill, you can do basically the same thing, can’t you?”

“Oh! But leveling up as you walk seems like a particularly easy way of gaining strength. Is he not extra strong?”

“Having a high level doesn’t do all that much for you here. There are plenty of ways to deal with attacks that are only special by having a lot of power, and I can’t even count the ways you could kill someone who only has extremely high defense.”

“Err...why does it seem like people with such immense power are a dime a dozen here?”

“Those who get really strong and have nowhere to go in this world eventually end up here. So we have all kinds of people.”

“As such, does that not mean those defending the walls are of equal

caliber?”

“That’s right. That’s why you need more than just a strong friend to get out of here.”

“Hmmm. What about that person?”

“He can come back to life if he dies.”

“And her?”

“She can ignore defense.”

“That robed individual?”

“Invisibility and the ability to steal items.”

“And him?”

“Everyone thought his skill to add a fixed point of damage to all attacks was awful, but he made up for it by using a rapid barrage attack style.”

“Umm. It seems to me you are seeing their personal feelings as well as their abilities...”

“That’s what’s written in their stats.”

“Then, how about him?”

“He can steal other’s skills.”

“Oh, perhaps he has pilfered skills from powerful individuals before?”

“There are quite a few people who can do that,” Van explained, “so those skills will often be stolen right back. And there are plenty of people who have defenses against their skills being stolen as well.”

“How about them?”

“They can absorb the powers of anyone they eat. It’s similar to stealing skills, but it’s a bit different since they have to defeat their opponent and prepare them as food to take the skill.”

“That one?”

“He can make poison and bacteria inside his body and spread them around. But status resistance is almost universal here, so he doesn’t have much of an advantage.”

“Her?”

“She can make a place that is optimal for training, but no matter how efficient the training is, someone with no strength to start with won’t make it very far.”

“Him?”

“Ultimate Defense. But that doesn’t help against people like the girl who ignores defenses.”

“Then what is so ‘ultimate’ about it? Ah, how about I change my approach? What about that waitress?”

“Her ability is Shopping. She can fulfill orders from any store, even those in other worlds. It’s not totally impossible to use in combat, but she doesn’t have any direct fighting abilities.”

“How about that man with the ostentatious katana?”

“That’s a star-cutter sword. Like its name suggests, it can split stars and planets apart.”

“Oh! Does that not make him the strongest so far?! Something like that should easily cut through the city walls!”

“But even the star-cutter sword will be blocked by an Ultimate Defense skill.”

“Ahh. So it is not like it can cut through *anything*.”

“A skill that ignores defenses can beat it, but that won’t be strong enough to break the walls.”

“I feel like I am not understanding anything here. Would it not be possible to fly over the walls?”

“There’s a space-time barrier. If you try to go over the walls, you’ll slip into another dimension and never return.”

“So, is there anyone you have seen so far who might be able to help?”

“It doesn’t look like it. They all hide their abilities to save themselves trouble, so they definitely are super confident in their own skills or want people to be shocked by the gap between their appearance and true strength, but none of them seem strong enough to defeat the Wall Defense Crew.”

“What exactly is going on in this academy?”

“It was created by some Demon Lord who was trying to raise someone strong enough to defeat him.”

“How do you know about that, Sir Van?”

“I mean, I’m the one who brought the academy here, after all.”

“Brought it here? I am not sure what that means.”

“Just what I said. The academy existed on another continent before. After creating the academy, the Demon Lord went off, saying he was going to reincarnate or something. It seemed to be just what I needed, so I brought it to Belm.”

“I fail to understand exactly what you needed it for, but this academy is not something that was set up recently, right?” Hanakawa asked, looking

around the cafeteria again. Though it was undeniably clean, the floor and walls showed a fair amount of age. It seemed like the building itself was at least decades old.

"Was it a thousand years ago? Maybe ten thousand? Either way, it's been quite a while."

"The scale is quite different from what I imagined! Does that not make you incredibly old, Sir Van?"

"Once you get strong enough, you end up becoming immortal. If you train hard enough, you can become immortal too."

"I see. But a Demon Lord? Are they not regularly defeated? I feel the students of this school are more than capable of defeating one." When Hanakawa was first summoned to this world, it was to defeat a Demon Lord. Working with his companions, he had succeeded. Thinking back on it, the Demon Lord had barely had any power and wouldn't have been the slightest threat to the denizens of this continent. A Demon Lord's invasion here would be little more than a minor scuffle.

"There are all kinds of Demon Lords. It's not like they're all the same strength."

"Ah. But that Demon Lord simply left? What was the purpose of building the academy?"

"Oh no, she's right over there." Van pointed at a black-haired, dark-eyed girl sitting across the room. She was rather attractive but had a delicate, slender build and didn't give off anything like an evil aura. The uniform she wore gave her a dark look, which one could take to be vaguely Demon Lord-like, but there were plenty of people in this cafeteria who gave a similar impression. Hanakawa couldn't see her as a Demon Lord.

"The situation here has become much too confusing for me. What is her situation?"

"I told you she went off to be reincarnated, right? That's just what she did. She was born to a couple in the school."

"Ah, so it is that common trope where she was reincarnated with her powers as a Demon Lord intact?"

"Right. But unfortunately for her, in the time it took to reincarnate, the abilities of the students here exploded. Her powers as a Demon Lord don't amount to much anymore."

"Huh? Does that not leave her like a clown, waiting longingly for

someone powerful enough to defeat her when she is in fact one of the weakest here?"

"Something like that. As a first-year student, she hasn't been sent out into combat yet, so she doesn't really have a way of comparing her strength to anyone else's."

"Then would that Demon Lord be unable to help me?"

"I don't think there's much she could do."

"I do not feel like we are making much progress here."

"Yeah, I thought there'd be someone useful around, but this is starting to look kind of difficult. It might be faster to go through the training and get sent out the normal way."

"It is starting to appear so. However, now that I have become stronger, it is possible that I am capable of managing it!"

"So, this is where you are, First-Year Hanakawa!"

Hanakawa turned around upon hearing his name to find Ingrid glaring at him as she approached.

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“Gah! Ingrid!”

“Oh? You seem awfully energetic! Looks like you are more than ready for another bout of training!”

“Actually, wait! Is this not strange? While it would be one thing to force me to study, what has led to you being so fixated on training me personally?!”

“I told you at the beginning, didn’t I? I’m not going to abandon you.”

“Actually, I do not need the training anymore. In truth, I have awakened, gaining tremendous power all at once! This must be a natural gift of some sort! As such, I do not believe I require any further special attention!”

“Oh? Go ahead and show me this new power,” she said. “I’ll judge it for you. If I’m satisfied, I’ll allow you to join the normal classes.” More than just his upperclassman, it seemed Ingrid was something akin to a superior officer.

“Uhh...is there not some way you can help me, Sir Van?” Hanakawa looked at Van desperately. The Sage had offered to help him, so he was hoping for a hand with this situation too.

“Ha ha ha, there’s nothing more I can do for you here. I’m a first-year and she’s a second-year.”

“Eh? That is all it takes to prevent you from assisting me?”

“I’ve already helped you a lot. You should be able to clear her special training with no problem now.”

“Ugh...you say that, but the thought of being pursued by such a bizarre creature again leaves me feeling somewhat depressed.”

“Oh, that’s right, I can’t afford to spend all my time with you, so we probably won’t meet again for a while. Try to do what you can by yourself from now on.”

“Wait, if you abandon me, things will get incredibly difficult!”

“Do your best.” As Van tried to brush him off, the sound of an explosion tore through the cafeteria.

“Wh-What was that?!” Hanakawa cried. Looking towards the source of the noise, he saw that one of the walls had been destroyed. Something had come crashing through it. It appeared to be an enormous piece of debris. The rubble had come straight through the wall, plowing through tables and students alike before striking the wall on the other side of the room.

Hanakawa looked through the destroyed wall to see where the piece of debris had come from. There were a number of ruined buildings burning in

its wake. It seemed this was just the aftermath of another building being attacked. A number of students appeared to have been killed by the impact. As Van had explained earlier, there were some strong people among the first-years, but most of them weren't that impressive.

Hanakawa rose from his seat and walked over to the hole in the wall. The view outside looked like a disaster. There was something in the sky above them, raining destruction down on the buildings below.

"Uhh...is that...a squid?" A squid-like creature was hovering in the sky, spinning in place.

"Looks like an ancient relic. I've never seen one like that before though," Van said, having come up beside him.

"Umm, it appears that squid thing has flown over the walls. Did you not say there was some sort of space-time barrier there? I thought one could not do such a thing."

"Yeah. Weird, huh?"

"Is that all you have to say about it?"

Either way, something had made it through the impregnable walls of Suudoria Academy. Hanakawa couldn't help but think this was a good chance for him to escape.

Chapter 8 — Being Seen Doing This Is Super Gross!

In an inner garden of Himeln's royal castle, the queen, Elisabelle, was receiving a soldier's report on Gerhardt's death.

"You say he has died, but are you sure?" After a short period of stunned silence, she collected herself.

"No," the soldier replied. "The only confirmation we have is that Sir Gerhardt's signal has disappeared."

"In that case, there is no evidence he is dead, is there?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. That is very true, but in general, we assume losing someone's signal to be a sign of their death..."

"But this is Gerhardt we're talking about." Gerhardt was one of Himeln's L units and a man adored by the gods. There was no way he could lose to anyone, and even if he did, he would easily come back to life if he died. Elisabelle couldn't believe he was actually dead.

"Precisely. That is why I have come here to ask how we should proceed."

"What precisely do you mean by his 'signal'?"

"That is referring to the location information provided by the Protocol of all our active units. Gerhardt's information has suddenly disappeared. In all cases prior, this has been due to the death of the unit." The Protocol was the system that governed warfare on the continent of Belm. Everything that occurred there was done through the Protocol. Using it, one could determine the location of any unit within an area under one's control.

"But losing someone's signal does not guarantee they are dead, does it?" If a unit left one's area of control, their signal would be lost. Generally, one had to abide by the rules of the Protocol to move between areas, but someone like Gerhardt might have been able to ignore those rules. After all, those mysterious gods had appeared at his side from all over. It would be stranger if he *wasn't* able to circumvent the system somehow. "But discussing this with you will provide us with nothing. I will head to the command room. Sorry,

Luu, but it looks like we'll have to part ways here."

"Oh, okay." Luu's blank expression made it clear she had no idea what was going on.

Elisabelle floated up into the air. Her class was Queen, which gave her the ability to give birth to allies with random abilities, but the ability to fly in addition to that was a matter of course. Soaring up into the sky, she headed to the control room on the highest floor of the castle.

"Your Majesty!" The soldiers in the room immediately knelt as she stepped in through the window.

"What is the situation in the area in question?"

"Please look at this." A hexagon was drawn on the wall. It must have been a map of the area Gerhardt had gone to. Blue and red dots were scattered about the map, blue representing allies, and red, enemies. Both colors were concentrated in the northeastern portion of the map, which was strange. As a territory under Himeln's control, the entire area should have been filled with blue dots. "Originally, we had 500 cost worth of units in the area, Princess Nina and her subordinates. After her defeat and Marino's return, our cost dropped by 205. Gerhardt and Marino then returned, increasing the cost by 600, followed by a loss of 813."

There was a limit to how many people could enter each area. Each faction had a cost limit of one thousand per area. Costs were determined by the size of the unit. L Units were five hundred, M units were one hundred, and S units were one. The original force was two M units and three hundred S units. Now, only eighty-two S units remained.

"Who exactly killed Nina anyway?"

When Elisabelle had first heard about Nina's death, she had written it off as unfortunate but unsurprising. Now that Gerhardt had also been caught up in it, she was very curious about what had started it all.

"Actually...there has been no movement from the enemy factions. The enemy soldiers present are all S units, so it is impossible to think they could defeat Lady Nina, let alone Sir Gerhardt."

"In other words, there is someone outside the control of the Protocol?"

"Yes. There is no way to hide the presence of someone under the Protocol's influence."

Considering the gods that occasionally visited Gerhardt, the possibility of a powerful being from outside the continent coming here could not be ruled

out. There was no way they could use the Protocol's interface to determine the location of such a being.

"Where did Gerhardt's signal disappear?"

"There is a settlement of infected in the southwest of the area. He was last seen at the boundary to the south of that."

"Send all S units to investigate. Connect to their vision so I can see." It was impossible to learn the details from here, so there was no choice but to send other units to investigate in person. They could link the visual and auditory senses of their units to the control room as well, allowing Elisabelle to see what was happening. Doing so cost points, so it wasn't something they could do as often as they wished, but now wasn't the time to be stingy.

"You wish to send all forces defending the area?"

"Yes. Dealing with this mysterious new foe is our priority now, don't you think?" Elisabelle still didn't believe Gerhardt had actually died, but the situation was still a problem. They needed to know what had happened and if it was still happening now.

A new image appeared on the wall beside the map. It was broadcasting the vision of the squad leader closest to the area of concern. It was obvious at a glance that something was wrong. Infected plant life was packed densely in the area, having grown extremely long. The moment a plant or animal was infected by the Seyla, it stopped all growth. Its form at the time of infection should have been preserved. Looking closer, they could see that the plants hadn't actually grown, but instead other plants were growing on top of the others.

The wall of grass was taller than the squad leader, so his squad was forced to cut their way through. The soldiers wore armor that covered them from head to toe, so there was little threat of them getting infected themselves, but they were still fearful of the grass and moved quite slowly.

After passing through the thick flora, they came upon an empty field. Aside from a gentle roll in the landscape, there was nothing there, not even the Seyla-infected plant life. It looked like all the infected grass had been forced out of this area to the edges.

The squad made its way through the reddish-brown earth. It did not take long for them to reach the location where Gerhardt's signal had disappeared. Gerhardt's body lay there. They could now confirm his signal had not disappeared due to him having moved beyond their range. Beside his body

were a boy and a girl. They were crouched at his side, searching his body. Noticing the presence of the soldiers, the girl turned to look at them. There was fear in her eyes.

“Being seen doing this is super gross!” she cried out, her hand still stuck in one of Gerhardt’s pockets. Elisabelle was perplexed. Though she still couldn’t be sure Gerhardt was dead, it was clear that something was wrong.

“Your Majesty, there is no signal from the enemy unit. In addition, there is no indication they are infected by the Seyla.” For some reason, animals infected by the Seyla had purple eyes, so they could be recognized at a glance. Then again, hiding one’s eye color wasn’t especially difficult, so it wasn’t a foolproof method of identifying them.

“Perhaps some food that made its way to the continent somehow managed to slip out and survive on its own?” By sheer coincidence, ordinary people occasionally made it to Belm from the outside world. Movement off the continent was severely restricted, but there weren’t any real limits on people coming in. Of course, no ordinary human could survive in Belm, so their presence was hardly an issue, but in this situation it was far too suspicious. It was hard to believe they were unrelated to Gerhardt’s case.

“Looters, I suppose? No matter. Kill them.”

At Elisabelle’s command, the squad of ten soldiers drew their weapons and charged. Once they had killed them, they could retrieve the bodies and search them for information, and even bring them back to life if necessary. Of course, it was possible they were the ones responsible for Gerhardt’s defeat and would just kill the soldiers, but the loss of ten or so S units was hardly a loss. If the sacrifice could help them learn anything about their opponent’s abilities, it was worth it.

But in the end, they didn’t learn anything. The charging soldiers collapsed without warning, and the image on the wall snapped off. As far as they could tell, it didn’t seem like anything had happened. The boy and girl had still been searching Gerhardt’s body.

“Did you see what happened?”

“Their signals are gone, so they have died. But it looks to me like they just collapsed for no reason...” one of the soldiers responded, echoing Elisabelle’s own thoughts.

“What about the other squads?”

“They are approaching the location now. I’ll switch to their vision.”

The image on the wall appeared again. Once again, they could see the two teenagers and Gerhardt's body, but this time the remains of the previous squad were lying there too. With ten S units dead, the remaining seventy-two surrounded the strangers.

"Order the soldier we are viewing through to do nothing, then send the others to attack."

"All seventy-one? I cannot imagine that will go well."

"Sending them one at a time will take too long. If they all attack at once, ignoring the possibility of friendly fire, they'll be more likely to succeed." Elisabelle was the absolute authority in Himeln. If she gave an instruction, her followers had no choice but to obey.

The S units attacked again. This time Elisabelle and the others in the control room looked closely to see what was going to happen. The attacking soldiers ran forward, and then just as before, all fell to the ground. Every attacking unit stopped moving, their signals disappearing from the area map. The only one left was the single soldier giving them a view of the situation.

"What is happening there? I still didn't see anything."

"Umm...I am starting to think we should avoid getting involved with them..." one of the soldiers in the control room said hesitantly.

"But we can hardly leave such a bizarre situation unchecked, can we?" Perhaps they didn't need to resolve it immediately, but they couldn't ignore it either. This was an unknown that could someday impact all of Himeln. "Okay, then. Luckily, we have dropped our cost in the area close to zero, so this time let's send nine M units."

The cost limit for an area was one thousand, so the most M units they could send at once was nine. If they killed the last remaining S unit, they could send ten, but then they would lose their ability to observe.

"Would it not make more sense to send an L unit right away?"

"That would require us to recall an L unit from the front lines." Only ten L units could be deployed at once, so they couldn't afford to thoughtlessly move them around.

"Understood. Sending nine M units from the capital to the designated area."

Sending forces in piece by piece like this wasn't the greatest strategy, but it was impossible to avoid with the cost limits on the individual areas. As they appeared in the center of the area, the nine M units moved, reaching the

location almost immediately. For an M unit, near instantaneous movement was a given.

"Now, how will it go this time?"

As M units, it was possible they would die just as quickly, but the loss of nine M units was still within the realm of acceptable loss.

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Chapter 9 — I Guess That Was a Bit Reckless of Me, but You Wouldn't Die from Something like That, Would You?

In an inner garden of the Himeln royal castle, a twelve-year-old girl, formed from the fusing of the Philosopher's Stones and named Luu by Yogiri, stood alone, wearing a lovely dress.

She was at a loss as to what she could do now. The queen of Himeln, who had been dragging her around everywhere, had left. Of course, reuniting with Yogiri was her primary objective, but she didn't know what she could do to accomplish that.

She had learned the makeup of the continent from listening to those around her. From that information, she could think of two ways to escape. One was to gather the resources known as points and pass through the area boundaries. However, she had no way of collecting points herself. Normally, one harvested them from those infected by the Seyla, but there were no infected in this area.

The other option was to be dispatched as part of Himeln's army. That would also require points based on how far she would be teleported, but the cost would be borne by the kingdom's stockpiles.

In short, there wasn't much she could do on her own. Though some of her powers as a goddess had returned to her, she still wasn't powerful enough to ignore the Protocol governing Belm.

"I guess I have to wait for...Hiruko, wasn't it?"

Luu didn't recognize her, but Hiruko was supposedly her daughter and was quite attached to her. Luu didn't know why she was in this world or what had happened to her in the past, but she did feel some familial connection with Hiruko, so she figured it was okay to trust her.

"Or maybe daddy will come for me?" She had grown fond of referring to Yogiri as her daddy. Of course, there was no blood connection between them,

but he had taken care of her when she was an infant, so she felt there was nothing stopping her from calling him that. He didn't seem all that interested in Luu himself, but he *was* interested in making use of her power, so it was possible he would come looking for her.

"I guess all I can do is wait." If she did anything rash, her freedom could end up being restricted, so for now she had to be obedient. Still, standing around in this garden all day would be boring, so she decided to leave the castle.

The area designated as Himeln's home base was made up of the royal castle and a city surrounding it. The area was a hexagon ten kilometers long on each side, and Luu had full freedom within it.

Leaving the garden behind, she passed through the front gate and headed into the city. Of course there were guards at each critical juncture, but none of them made a move to stop her from coming and going. Luu was considered an L unit in Himeln. The L units were under the direct authority of the royal family, so Luu was treated as royalty herself.

One might consider it strange that someone considered royalty would be allowed to wander the city alone, but her classification as an L unit made that no problem. L units were the country's greatest military strength, so no one would even consider the possibility that someone who lived in the city would be capable of harming her.

Passing through the castle's main gate, she looked ahead. The castle was built on land raised above the city, which was composed of densely packed buildings. Most of the structures were made of wood and stone, giving the impression of a rather simplistic culture. The streets were lined with shops and packed with people. While being prosperous was all well and good, the sight made Luu feel uneasy.

"Didn't they say something about having difficulty finding food?" There were easily thousands of people within her field of view, and the city made up the majority of this area, so it was fairly large in scope.

Luu used her powers as a god to scan the region. The interior was 260 square kilometers. The population was about one million. Supporting this many people would require a considerable amount of food. But due to the infection of the Seyla, there was a limited amount of plant and animal life that could be used. She had heard that this caused fighting to break out over control of the few resources left, but that didn't seem to be the case here.

Walking down the large staircase in front of her, Luu entered the city. The street was lined with stalls. Feeling hungry, she stepped up to one that was selling meat skewers. Curious about where it had come from, she used her powers to determine what kind of meat it was. Though she was far from omniscient in her current state, she could at least trace its origin.

The meat was human. It had come from an S unit that Elisabelle had created. They had been weak even among the S units and thus useless for the kingdom.

"That's...huh. Yeah, I don't like this." Luu left the stall behind. As a god, she could eat any sort of food she pleased without concern. But with a human like Yogiri being her daddy, she couldn't help but hesitate at the thought of eating human meat. "But if the queen can make as much food as they need, what's the point of fighting? Well, if the other countries are going to attack, then they don't have much choice but to fight."

Luu continued down the main street. The city was full of energy but still seemed hollow somehow. Normally, one wouldn't expect Himeln to possess the national power necessary to support a city of this size. Belm was large enough, but it had few natural resources, and the area system made moving around extremely difficult. Their only contact with other nations was through war, and trade with nations outside of Belm was extremely limited. Considering the situation, the apparent prosperity in front of her was hard to believe. With that in mind, the liveliness of the area seemed fake.

"Hmmm. How do I know enough to think this is strange for a human city, though?" Luu only had memories from as far back as meeting Yogiri. She had only become self-aware a few days ago, so it was strange that she could speak at all. "I guess it doesn't matter." She knew she wouldn't find the answer by asking herself, so there was no point in thinking about it.

Continuing down the road, she made it to a large square. She walked inside, taking a seat on the edge of a large fountain dominating its center.

"Now then, I guess the best I can do is gather information." They had come to this continent to search for a Sage and get their Philosopher's Stone. They didn't know where that Sage was, so she decided to see if she could find any clues within Himeln itself. Even if she couldn't, knowing there were no clues here would still be of help to Yogiri.

"I guess I should ask someone. But who? Picking people on the street seems kind of inefficient. I guess I should ask someone more important."

The moment Luu stood up, everything around her turned dark. At first she thought a cloud had passed in front of the sun, but it was too dark for that. Curious, she looked up into the sky to see an enormous object floating there.

"Huh?" As she thought to investigate it, it fell. Luu immediately jumped out of the way, flying to the edge of the square. The enormous object crashed into the fountain, destroying the square around it. The impact caved in the ground, opening fissures all around it. The people were crushed, killed by flying chunks of stone pavement, and fell into the holes in the ground.

Still floating in the air, Luu was unharmed, but most others had suffered fatal injuries. The object looked like a soft white ball. Comparing it to what she could remember, it almost looked like an enormous maggot. Countless foot-like appendages lined the bottom. Considering its size, it didn't seem likely it would be capable of moving around with feet that small, but the wriggling appendages gave a powerful impression. Large, transparent wings were attached to the top of the object. It didn't seem like they were substantial enough to let the thing fly, but they also gave an impression of strength.

It was hard to call the thing anything other than a monster, so Luu immediately assumed it was an enemy attack. According to the rules of this continent, no one should be able to attack the area unless they controlled the areas bordering it, but it appeared there was some way to break those rules. Though she had been taken off guard at first, she collected herself and investigated the creature. It was the queen of Himeln, Elisabelle.

"What?"

"Oh, Luu. I didn't know you were here." Luu turned to the source of the voice. At the head of the massive maggot she could now see Elisabelle—or at least, her upper body. She looked tiny in comparison to the rest of the creature, so it was easy to miss her at first glance. Everything below her waist had disappeared into the giant maggot. Luu didn't know if she was fused to it or just buried inside, but thanks to her powers as a god, she could tell that the entire creature was Elisabelle herself. "I guess that was a bit reckless of me, but you wouldn't die from something like that, would you?"

"Umm, what is this?"

"This is just in case. We have come across an enemy, so I thought to make preparations." Countless tentacles stretched out from her maggot-like body. They reached out and wrapped around the people in the city nearby.

The air was filled with screams. Many people had died, but there were still plenty of survivors. The tentacles grabbed everyone, living and dead, and pulled them into the main body. Within moments, everyone had been absorbed.

This was Elisabelle's Unbirthing skill. Those she had given birth to and their descendants could be absorbed and stored as energy.

"See you later," she said as her body began to squirm, crawling across the city.

As Luu had first thought, the feet were only for decoration, as they were now being crushed between her body and the ground.

Elisabelle left the city square behind, making her way down the main street. Every person she passed was captured and absorbed, causing her body to grow even larger. There were some it seemed she was ignoring, but those were likely people who hadn't been born from her. Eventually, she grew too large to fit in the main street, and she began destroying the buildings around her as she continued onward. She didn't appear to mind the damage she was doing.

"I guess this isn't a good time to start asking questions."

Luu looked at the castle she had been about to return to. A good half of it had been destroyed. Apparently, Elisabelle had been pretty large when she had jumped from there. She must have absorbed the people from the castle already, so there was little point in Luu heading there now.

With no other options, Luu headed in the opposite direction of the queen. Finding a park that had yet to be destroyed, she took a seat on a bench and dropped her head with a sigh.

"Now what am I supposed to do?"

"Found you."

Luu raised her head. A girl in a white dress was standing in front of her. It was her. To be precise, it was exactly what Luu would have expected to look like at sixteen years old.

"Uhh...you're *me*, right?"

"Yes," the girl replied bluntly.

"You came to me?! I didn't even get a chance to go looking for you!"

"I guess that's how it looks from your perspective."

"How?"

Without answering, the girl stretched out her hand. It seemed she didn't

think there was any need to talk further. Once she joined with another part of herself, their memories would merge and she would learn everything she wanted to know.

That should have been exactly what Luu wanted. She had come to this continent to regain her powers, and this would effectively accomplish that goal. But still, she hesitated.

"What will happen to me if we fuse? It looks to me like you have more pieces than I do." If she was able to come and go through the area boundaries, this version of herself must have been stronger than Luu. If they fused now, she would expect the other girl to retain control of their body.

"Are you worried about losing yourself? That is okay. If you want, we can reconstruct ourselves with you as the base."

"Are you okay with that?"

"There's nothing to be okay with. We're both me. On top of that, your present self is only an illusion anyway. We are still missing a critical piece of ourselves."

Luu had recognized that the moment she'd seen this girl. Although between the two of them, they had almost all of Luu's parts, the part of her that held her memories and will, her soul, was still missing.

"Then let's do that for now." They couldn't stay separate forever and would have to fuse eventually, so Luu resolved herself and took the girl's hand. The boundary between their hands disappeared, and the girl's memories flowed into her.

She had awoken in a place she didn't recognize, in front of a boy she had little interest in, so she had immediately left. She then sensed a part of herself nearby and so had gone to find Luu. That was all she had experienced so far.

As she thought about the girl's experience, their fusion completed. Luu's mental state didn't feel like it had changed all that much. She had grown again, looking to be about twenty years old. Her appearance alone had returned her to her prime. Neither of their clothes would fit her new body, so they had ripped apart.

Standing around naked was unpleasant, so she created some clothes for herself, using the design of the ones she had received from Tomochika as a base. She hadn't been particularly fond of the luxurious dress Elisabelle had given her, and the simple dress her other self had been wearing felt too plain. The clothes Tomochika had given her were perfect, so she recreated them in a

more appropriate size for her new body.

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“So...this place isn’t actually a continent.”

Now, she could get a grasp on the nature of Belm. Through illusions and teleportation magic, countless small islands had been made to seem like a single piece of land. She didn’t know why someone would go through the trouble, but she didn’t care much. Now that she had obtained the power and knowledge she needed to escape, she could leave whenever she wished.

“Okay...I guess I should start by finding Hiruko.” She considered going to find Yogiri immediately, but she didn’t want to face the cold reception she’d probably receive there. If Hiruko was with her, things would probably go smoother. Searching for Hiruko’s presence, she teleported to the other god’s side.

Chapter 10 — We're Not Gonna Get Attacked by More Weirdos, Are We?!

Yogiri and Tomochika hadn't managed to move much from the area boundary.

"Aren't we getting attacked way too often here?! Come on, give us some room to breathe!" Tomochika complained to no one in particular.

"Himeln, wasn't it? I guess they don't have any reason to take it easy on us," Yogiri replied.

After killing someone who had appeared to be their prince, they had been attacked by the gods who protected him, and then by soldiers covered in full body plate armor. After killing them, nine men and women who seemed quite full of themselves had appeared, floating in the air in front of them. They didn't have the same armor as the other soldiers, nor any kind of matching outfits. They could have been commanders in Himeln's army, but apparently, that army didn't have uniforms.

"Hey, hey, I don't feel nothin' from these two."

"Yet it is true they defeated seventy-one S units."

"Sure, but even we could kill thousands of S units without breakin' a sweat. We're on a different level than those guys."

"We need to defeat them before they have the chance to do something!"

"All right, let's get to it!"

"Die!"

And then all nine of them flopped to the ground as Yogiri responded to their killing intent.

"We're not gonna get attacked by more weirdos, are we?!" Tomochika looked around, now suspicious of everything.

I must admit to feeling somewhat worn down. It has become expected that our enemies all die of their own accord. Though it is clearly an issue for a successor of the Dannoura School to feel that way...I suppose I cannot complain much in this situation. I can hardly ask that you cease.

“Looks like there’s one left,” Yogiri said, looking at the single remaining soldier, who was frozen in place. The armor he was wearing indicated that he was a low-level soldier. He hadn’t attacked them, so Yogiri had left him alone. He was now trembling slightly. His helmet hid his expression, but it was still clear enough that he was terrified.

“What are you doing?” Yogiri asked.

“U-Umm...please don’t kill me!” the soldier responded.

“If you don’t attack us, I won’t. I was just wondering why you’re the only one who didn’t come after us.” Yogiri figured there was a reason a single one of them had been held back, but the soldier didn’t seem willing to answer. “If you don’t want to answer, that’s fine. Looks like they’re done sending reinforcements, so I guess we should move on. Did you see which way Scott went flying?” Though he could guess Gerhardt had done something to Scott, he hadn’t been able to tell exactly what had happened. He assumed Scott had just been sent flying backwards, but he didn’t have any proof of it.

“Oh, that’s right. We were going to look for Scott. I saw him go flying, so...this way, I think?”

“So you did see.”

“Yeah. Not much I could do other than watch, though.” Tomochika pointed to the north, back in the direction of Scott’s old village, so they decided to head that way. It was possible the dead Himeln soldiers had some cylinders with points in them, but that didn’t help much if they didn’t know how to use them. It was best to reunite with Scott so that he could explain how things worked.

“Okay, let’s go.”

Stepping over the bodies, the two of them headed north. There was supposed to be grass ahead of them, but the earth was now bare. The terrain had been transformed by Gerhardt and then again by one of the gods, so the deathless, infected grass had been moved outside the area of effect.

After walking for a while, they found a huge hole in the ground. It was where Scott’s village had once been. Last time they had been here, the hole had been covered in plants, but it seemed the transformation of the terrain had reached even this point. Looking around the hole, there was no sign of Scott. Avoiding the pit, they continued forward.

“Takatou, can I say something?”

“Hm? Are you going to say something bad?”

“Uh, not really, it’s just a way to bring this up.”

“Go ahead, then.”

“Why is that guy following us?!” Tomochika turned and pointed behind them. The lone soldier in full armor was standing there. He had been walking behind them the entire time.

“Is he keeping an eye on us?”

Indeed. He appears to be some sort of scout. If you wished to avoid further trouble, perhaps killing him would be best.

“If he’s just going to follow us around, we can ignore him.”

Even if we spare him, is it perhaps best we attempt to lose him?

“That would probably be difficult. He’s definitely more athletic than I am.”

Even a small fry soldier would have minimal strength, being involved in the war in Belm. He likely had skills and the level-up system from Battlesong, so it was hard to believe an ordinary person like Yogiri would be able to lose him in a barren field like this.

“I wonder how long he plans on watching us?”

“Probably forever,” Tomochika guessed.

The soldier seemed terrified but still stuck with them. It seemed he was doing everything he could to suppress the urge to run away, but it would still take more than a little effort to shake him.

“Oh, it’s Scott! Hey!” Tomochika called out in a loud voice. There was a small hill in front of them, on top of which a figure had appeared. Yogiri couldn’t recognize him at a distance, but it was no surprise to him that Tomochika could.

“Ah, Mr. Takatou! I’m glad you are safe.”

They had managed to reunite with Scott without too much difficulty. His clothes were in terrible shape, but he seemed uninjured.

“I’m glad you’re okay too.”

“I got sent flying pretty far. It seems he went easy on me, though, as he didn’t want me to revive right there in front of him.”

“Do you know what’s going on now?” Yogiri asked, giving Scott a brief explanation of what had happened since they had been separated.

“I don’t know much about those gods, but if you defeated an L unit, that’s a pretty big deal. I would expect them to try and take revenge.”

“If that’s the case, why would they send so many weaker guys after us?”

Yogiri asked.

"Good question. If the L unit came here on his own, they may not know the situation very well. Maybe they were just trying to see what was going on?"

"I see. So that guy is probably telling their home base about us?" Yogiri pointed at the soldier some distance from them.

"Probably. Though I can't prove it."

"Okay, we managed to find Scott, so now what?" Tomochika asked. "Originally, we were going to the Neutral Zone to gather information."

"Is there anywhere else we could gather information?"

"Heading to a nearby settlement sounds like the best bet. It may not give us much in terms of information, but it's going to be dark soon."

Looking up, they noticed the sun had crept awfully close to the horizon. They had a simple tent and sleeping bags in their packs, but Yogiri felt it would be best to avoid spending the night in an open wasteland like this.

"Okay, let's go there," he agreed.

"We're really not getting anywhere in the long run, are we?" Tomochika complained.

"I feel the same way, but we don't have a choice but to keep trying."

"This way," Scott said. "The barren ground ends close by, so the settlement should be intact."

With Scott in the lead, the three of them started walking.

"I guess that guy is probably going to keep following us, huh?" Yogiri commented.

"I imagine—wait, there are more!" shouted Tomochika as she turned to look, prompting Yogiri to look back as well.

There was only supposed to be one soldier following them, but now there were two. The second was a woman in a tight white robe. Her appearance made it clear that she was not an ordinary foot soldier.

"Who are you?" Yogiri asked instinctively. Judging from their past experiences, he expected to be ignored, but she unexpectedly answered.

"Hello. My name is Childa. I'm an L unit for Himeln!" The three of them stared at her in silence. "Oh, come on! I introduced myself, so you can at least do the same!"

"Uh, our names are private." They had almost certainly been designated as enemies of Himeln. Yogiri didn't feel it was a good idea to give someone

who worked for the country their names.

"Anyway," Childa continued, "as you may guess from my appearance, I am something of a doctor."

"Oh, you're a doctor. I just thought you were doing some sort of erotic nurse cosplay."

"It kind of irks me to hear you say that so bluntly. I came here to revive Gerhardt, but just like his sister, I couldn't do it. Do you know why?"

"I mean, isn't it obvious that dead people don't come back to life?" Yogiri replied.

"Not at all. My powers allow me to manipulate time. I can reverse it at will. I've never seen someone who doesn't come back to life after I do that."

"I don't know anything about your power, but maybe you can't use it anymore?"

"You think so?" Childa asked, cutting through the air with her hand. As she did, the head of the soldier beside her went flying. The metal armor covering him from head to toe hadn't so much as slowed her down. Swinging her hand around, she slashed the soldier to pieces. What had once been a soldier was now just a mess of red on the ground. But she then aimed her palm at him, and like a film rewinding, his scattered remains lifted into the air and stitched themselves back together.

"You see? It still works perfectly fine." The freshly revived soldier didn't seem to have any idea what had happened. If what Childa said was true, she had probably rewound him to a point before he had been killed, so he had no memory of ever being hurt.

"If you're a doctor, why can you cut people up with your hand like that?!" Tomochika exclaimed.

"Is that what you have a problem with here?" Childa answered.

I believe back-alley doctors performing surgeries with their bare hands are common enough in fiction.

"Anyway," Yogiri interjected, "I'm not sure what you're trying to get at, but we're just passing through. Do you need something from us?"

"You did something to Nina and Gerhardt, didn't you? So of course I have to avenge them."

"Okay, seriously, when is this going to end?" If killing people to protect himself would cause others to seek revenge, this was going to go on forever. Yogiri was already getting sick of it.

Such is the cycle of vengeance. I was once caught up in something similar!

"What did you do about it?"

We wiped out their entire clan. Leaving no survivors was the simplest method of ending things.

"Are you serious?" For a ghost from the Heian Era, that may have been common sense, but Yogiri wasn't interested in taking that path.

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Chapter 11 — Interlude: The Agency Tries to Eliminate All Aliens and Otherworlders

Ryouko Ninomiya, Carol S. Lane, Euphemia, and Risley were all working together. Following the orders of the UEG, they were wiping out all life in the world. Most of the work was being done by the vampire Euphemia. She was far and away the strongest of the group, so there was little need for the others to offer support.

"I am an envoy of an ancient god, the UEG. For many years, she was sealed away in this world. For that reason, all those who live in this world are guilty of conspiring in her imprisonment. As such, you shall pay for your crime with your deaths."

Euphemia sent a telepathic message to an entire city. It was transmitted directly into their minds, so even if they covered their ears or were deaf, they would still hear it. She repeated the pronouncement a number of times. She would continue until most of the residents understood. There might be some who would still fail to understand, but she couldn't get hung up on trying to be perfect.

Once she was convinced the majority had understood the message, she moved into action. As an example for the others, she killed a few people where they could be seen by many. She wanted them to realize that her threat had been real.

Naturally, the city fell into chaos. The rumors spread, and many began trying to escape. She let a number of them go. The plan was to spare about a third of the population to spread the name of the UEG. Once the determined number of people had escaped, she put up a barrier enclosing the town.

It didn't take too long for despair to seize the city after that. Once those who remained understood their situation and began begging the UEG for mercy, the plan was complete. Euphemia set the city ablaze. They had all

recognized their sin and so could be executed as a group. Killing them one by one would take forever.

Despite the logic of it, Ryouko couldn't help but shrink back. Even if they were random people from another world, she couldn't write them off so easily.

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While Euphemia was destroying the city, the other three waited in a small shack nearby. Carol was staring out the window, while Ryouko and Risley sat bored at the table. There wasn't much for them to do while they waited.

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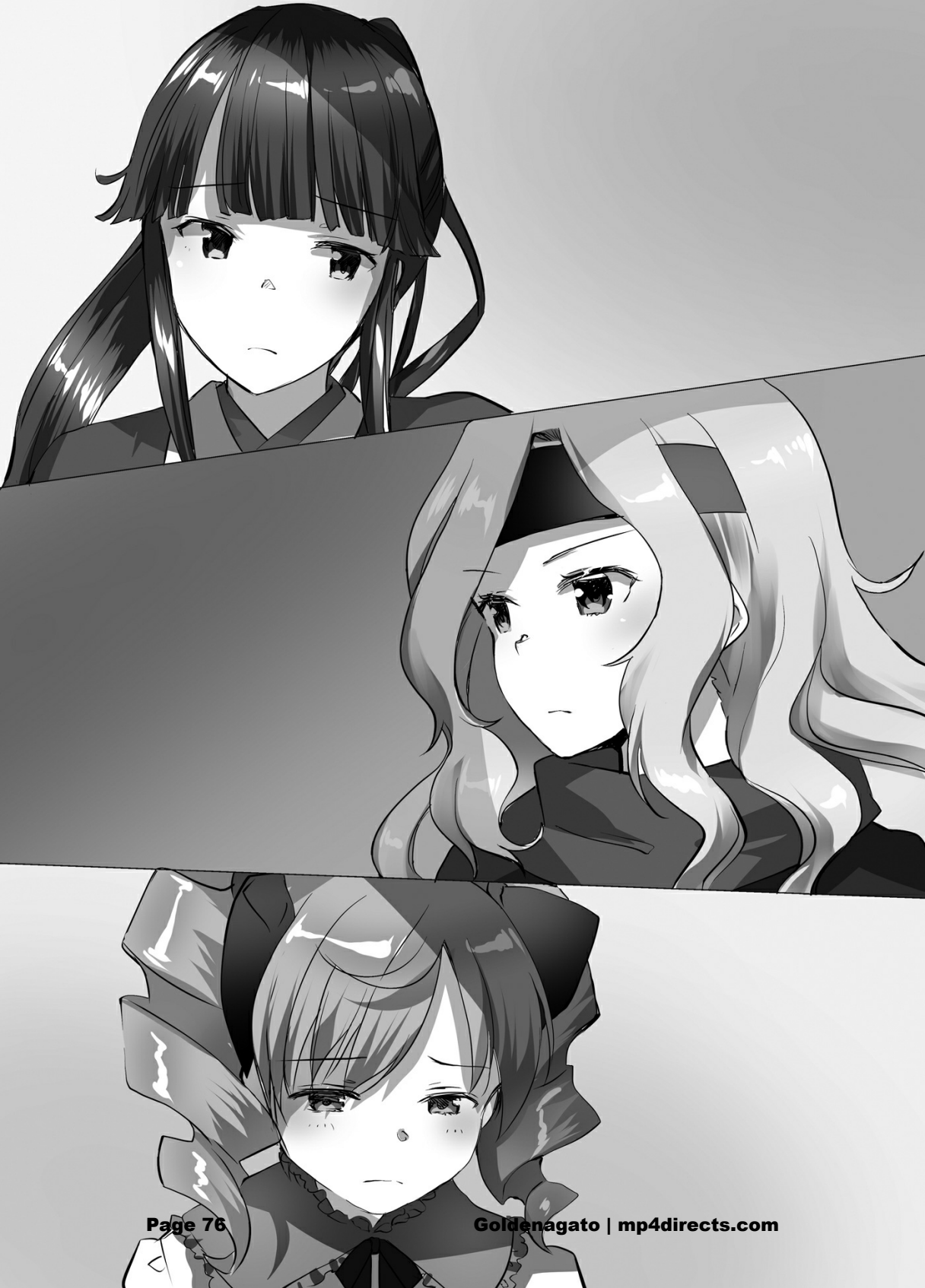

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“How many cities do you figure she’s destroyed by now?” Carol asked casually as she stared outside. The city enclosed within the barrier was now in flames. That would be the last step. Once everything had burned to the ground, they would be done here. Unlike Ryouko, Carol seemed somewhat unbothered by the situation. Maybe she had figured none of it mattered since she was from another world.

“Umm...please don’t think badly of Euphemia. Well, what she’s doing is bad, but...she’s probably doing it to protect me...” Though Euphemia was under the UEG’s control, she hadn’t lost her free will. She was still as loyal to Risley as ever.

“Yeah, I understand. After all, she doesn’t need us. She’s doing all the dirty work herself.”

“Umm, do you think they’ll actually kill everyone in the world?”

“Probably. Even if they don’t, they’ve killed enough people that society will probably collapse anyway.”

Euphemia had wiped out numerous cities. Zakuro and Haruto were killing people in the same way, so a large number of people had been wiped out by now.

“They’re going to let us live if we help, right?” Risley asked.

“They said they considered us friends, so probably,” Carol answered.

“What will happen to Yogiri though?”

“I can’t imagine he’ll die that easily. It would probably be best if we could meet back up with him and get the UEG to recognize him as a friend as well, though I doubt things will be that easy.”

“They’re going to send you all back to your home world after this, right?”

“Apparently, that’s Haruto’s plan, so it should be okay for us to go with him, right?”

Once all intelligent life in this world had been erased, the UEG and her followers were going to return to their world. Haruto had asked to be sent back to his own world at that time. They regularly met back up with Haruto and spoke with him. All of this was based on the UEG’s whims, but clinging to her seemed like their best chance of getting home.

“I wonder if I could go with you two?”

“Hmm...I wouldn’t recommend it,” Carol said. “The Agency tries to eliminate all aliens and otherworlders, so I wouldn’t be able to allow that.” The Agency to which Carol belonged existed to protect the world from

supernatural beings. Though they couldn't be said to represent justice, they were certainly an indispensable organization. If someone didn't take a stand against supernatural entities, the world would fall into chaos.

"Oh, I see."

"Either way, we have no idea how things are going to go here. So I guess we'll decide when the time comes."

Carol and Risley seemed to take it for granted that all intelligent life in this world would be wiped out. However, Ryouko couldn't agree. If the UEG continued her plan, she would inevitably cross Yogiri. But Yogiri Takatou was invincible in every sense of the word. That was the conclusion reached by the Institute's thorough research on him, and she couldn't help but feel they were right.

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ACT 2

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Chapter 12 — Seeing Someone Act All High and Mighty Makes You Want to Force Them to See Their Own Weakness

“Mmmm. I feel quite refreshed.”

The UEG awoke, sitting up slowly. Though she had no need for food or sleep, since she had taken on human form, she was still slow to wake up, felt thirsty, and even needed to relieve herself.

Getting out of bed, she made use of the bathroom before getting a glass of water and helping herself to the snacks laid out on the table. She was in Touichirou’s house. She had come here in search of someone powerful, happened across Touichirou, and after defeating him, taken a nap in his house.

“Hmm...these snacks are quite good. Oh, they are already all gone?”

As a god, she could easily create something similar with her powers, but whether it would taste good or not was a different story. The time, passion, and skill that went into creating food like this gave it its flavor in her mind. Even if she recreated the food she had just eaten exactly as it was, she doubted it would taste as good.

“Perhaps I have made a mistake here. Reviving Touichirou would be easy, but...”

The moment she had destroyed him, she had recorded the information that made up his existence. She could use that information to reconstruct him fairly easily.

“But I have already decided to wipe out all life in this world. Returning him to life will just mean I have to kill him again...and it appears this village is made up of similar people anyway. I suppose I should go try one of the others.”

She could feel the presence of powerful beings besides Touichirou nearby, so she could force them to make the snacks she was looking for. She would

kill them in the end, but she could put that off if they proved useful to her.

"That seems to be enough of a break. I suppose I should take out everyone in this area before leaving."

Stepping out of Touichirou's house, she was greeted with a peaceful rural landscape. The cultivated fields were dotted here and there with buildings. She knew that this was the home base of the organization known as the Slow Life League. She had figured that out by analyzing the barrier that separated this area from the rest of the world.

She was on an island floating in the sky, connected for some reason to countless other islands through teleportation devices to make a single continent out of them. The few powerful members of the Slow Life League lived in this home base.

"Hmm. There seem to be a fair number of powerful individuals here." The UEG adjusted her own strength to match that of her opponents, but if it dropped too low, things would get boring for her, so she left the weakest beings to her subordinates.

The UEG walked casually between the fields. She could teleport instantly if she wanted to, but there was no reason for her to hurry. As she continued down the road, she came across a worker harvesting wheat. Normally such work would be left to simple peasants, but this seemed to be something of a hobby for the members of the Slow Life League. The League members themselves were taking part in the work. She could tell this individual had some level of power.

"Once I have witnessed you, there is nothing left but for me to fight."

The UEG stepped off the road and into the field. A lone man was harvesting the wheat by hand. As she approached casually, the man eventually noticed her and turned around.

"Who are you?" He was young and looked fairly well put together. The difference between him and Touichirou's shabby look was quite stark.

"I am the UEG, the god who will wipe out all life in this world."

"What? Are you the one we drafted a while ago?" The man sighed. "I guess we get people like you from time to time. But hey, if you're here, that must mean you're pretty strong." He already seemed quite fed up with her. "I'm not really good at teaching the newbies. You should go see Touichirou. He hates being bothered, but he's better than I am. He'll take care of you no matter how much he complains."

“I have already erased Touichirou.”

“What? Oh, he’s really not here. Where did he go?” A doubtful look passed over the man’s face as he looked for Touichirou. He realized Touichirou wasn’t in the area but didn’t yet believe that he was dead.

“Come now, you can just believe what I told you. On my dignity as a god, I would not lie. I have erased him.”

“So what do you want? As you can see, I’m kind of busy here.”

“Hmm. Allow me to ask, then, why busy yourself with such work as this? Surely you could leave it to your subordinates, or use your powers to finish the work in an instant.”

“It’s a hobby. Tilling the fields, planting the seeds, growing the wheat, harvesting it, milling it, and then making bread out of it. The process is what’s fun, so what’s the point of skipping it?”

“As I thought. You are not so different from me. I understand how you feel.”

“I’m not sure you do. I asked what you wanted. If that’s all, can I go back to my work?”

“That is all I wished to ask, but I still need to take your life. It pains me somewhat to kill someone I understand so well, but it is something I have already decided upon, so I cannot avoid it.”

The man sighed again. “I don’t know what you did to Touichirou, but he’s way too soft-hearted...”

“Indeed, he did produce such an aura.”

“So what’s your motive? If you’re going to be a serial killer, you need a motive, right?”

“There are plenty of serial killers who lack such a thing. But in short, revenge. I was sealed away in this world for quite some time. All living things in this world are complicit in that crime. As such, I am punishing them for that sin.”

“So you’re just throwing a fit?”

“That is what it means to be a god. Regret your failing as you die.”

“I’m sure Touichirou ran off after playing around with you for a bit, but I’m not as nice as he is. I’m warning you, if you attack me, I will counterattack automatically. If you don’t want to die, then you better not do something stupid.”

“Hm. A counterattack, you say?” Curious, the UEG threw a punch at him.

It didn't have any particular power behind it, so was only about as dangerous as a punch from an ordinary human girl.

There was an invisible wall around the man. The moment her fist struck it, power exploded outwards, becoming a torrent of light rushing towards her and incinerating her arm down to her shoulder.

"Aha. So that is what you meant."

"Dammit, look what you did to my field!" the man exclaimed. The light had fired in a straight line, burning through the crops behind her.

"That is hardly my fault. Your counterattack was too broad. You should have tightened the scope."

"Tch. I guess that wasn't enough to kill you, so you must be pretty tough."

"Indeed. I was a little surprised. That was more power than I expected from you."

"Whatever. If you really want to fight, let's go somewhere else. I don't want any more damage to my field."

"No, I have had quite enough of that." She had acquiesced to the same request from Touichirou. Doing it again would be boring. Instead, she reached out with her newly regenerated right arm. As she touched the barrier, she responded with appropriate force of her own. The barrier fired a beam of light at her again, but it didn't stop her from reaching through and grabbing the man's neck.

"Good job. You did it," the man said. "But so what? My automatic defense isn't the limit of my power."

"There is no need for more. I have seen the limit of your strength." The UEG tightened her grip. With a dull sound, the man's neck snapped. She let him go, and his body fell motionless to the ground.

"What limit is that? Did you think killing me would be enough to get rid of me?"

Turning around, the UEG saw the man she had just killed standing behind her. He seemed pretty proud of himself, which bothered her a little.

"I intentionally left room for you to revive yourself."

"Now you just sound like a sore loser."

"Can you say that when that is all you have remaining?"

Not realizing what she meant, the man sneered at her. "What are you talking...about..." As he spoke, he realized something was wrong.

"Your strength stems from connecting to yourself in numerous parallel

worlds, does it not? That makes your power next to infinite. Even if you died here, that would be like no more than losing a single hair. I was able to understand that much, so I killed you in all of those parallel worlds as well."

"No way. How is that even possible?"

"It is something you are capable of, so how hard is it to believe there are others with the ability to operate across dimensions? For a god, such strength is expected. Conflict between gods necessitates the ability to search for your opponent's backups and erase them all at once."

A black circle appeared beside the UEG, which she reached into with one hand. Though it would be impossible to tell just from looking at it, the circle was a gateway connecting parallel worlds. The UEG pulled a corpse identical to the man in front of her out of the hole. Over and over she pulled out corpses, making a pile of bodies that all belonged to the same person.

"Now there is no room for doubt, yes? In truth, seeing someone act all high and mighty makes me want to force them to see their own weakness. Hmm...it appears I have gone too far. While this was my intent, it is boring if you react so strongly."

The man was terrified. His assertive personality had completely crumbled. In the next moment, he vanished. He had run away.

"Are you a fool?" Reaching into the black hole again, she pulled him out and threw him unceremoniously to the ground. "I just pulled your alternate selves out from parallel worlds in front of you. No matter where you run, I can obviously find you."

"Please, spare me..." The man planted his face in the dirt as he begged. That was the most he could do at this point.

"What a killjoy. What happened to your confidence?"

"Just because I'm strong doesn't mean I want to fight! I just wanted to live a relaxing life here..."

"And yet, you believed yourself to be quite strong. Do you have no self-respect?"

"But...there's no value in killing someone like me! Please! I'll do anything! Anything! Is there nothing I can do?!"

"I told you from the beginning I intended to kill you. All that remained was to see how much of a fight you put up. If you had fought until the end, I would have at least asked your name. Die."

Having lost interest, she killed the man, erasing his existence. At the same

time, the bodies she had pulled from parallel worlds all vanished. This wasn't a fight anymore. If the difference in their strength was too great, her opponent disappeared at the thought of killing them, vanishing from all worlds at once.

"Touichirou put up a much better fight than he did. Perhaps he was the strongest one here?" Regardless, there was no one who could truly match the UEG, so any difference in their power levels amounted to nothing.

"Hmm...I have been limiting myself to match my opponent's strength, but if I have to limit myself too much, my motivation will suffer. Let us try this: I shall seek out anyone stronger than Touichirou here, though if no such opponents exist, not much will change."

If she knew everything beforehand, she would never be surprised. In order to avoid that, she hadn't searched the area in depth before, but looking for people stronger than Touichirou wouldn't be too much trouble.

The UEG searched the entire hexagonal area. There were a number of powerful beings there, but the one with the strongest impression was on the southeast edge. She didn't check precisely how strong they were, but with such a strong presence, they must have been quite powerful.

She began walking to the southeast, having totally forgotten her plan to find someone capable of baking for her.

Chapter 13 — My Power Is to Kill Anything by Thinking It

The UEG walked slowly through the home base of the Slow Life League. The house she had been sleeping in was right around the center of the area, so her destination was about ten kilometers away. She could do almost anything instantly, so if she chose to, she could teleport there immediately, but she didn't want to give off that kind of look. Even though she *could* do anything she wanted, she was not so unrefined as to act that way. She felt it was best to enjoy the process.

"That said, I am growing tired of this. Walking around forever seems equally dull."

The fields around her all felt the same. Strolling down a road with no change in scenery felt like a waste of time. As she was thinking of how best to pick up the pace, she noticed a farm in the distance.

"Hmm. Proceeding on horseback could be interesting."

Her interest piqued, she headed to the farm. There were a number of animals being kept there.

"I was hoping for something like a horse, but there is no proper livestock here, is there?" The farm kept enormous birds, lions, snakes, and dragons, but that was it. "Divine beasts, I suppose. While I am not confident they are suitable as a mount for me, they will serve for some fun."

Hopping the fence, the UEG entered the farm. The monsters within immediately became enraged. It seemed they weren't fond of anyone other than their master.

"Hey, you! What are you doing?!"

As the UEG inspected the animals to decide which would be best to ride, a girl ran out of the house. She wore simple clothes like those of any farm girl, but her pleasant features gave her a pretty look.

"I have grown bored with walking. I was looking for a beast which I might ride."

“What?! You just popped in here out of nowhere! What are you saying?!”

“Hm? Are these creatures not used for riding? I do not mind. I will find some way to make them cooperate.”

“No, no, no! This isn’t about your opinion here!” The girl stepped between the monsters as she approached the UEG. “These animals are very sensitive! They won’t let some random stranger ride them!”

“I see. But saying so only makes me wish to ride them even more!”

“Let me ask again, who are you?” Despite the obvious hostility the monsters were showing her, the UEG was unfazed. The girl seemed to notice that and was therefore on guard against her.

“I am the UEG, the god who will wipe out all life in this world.”

“Listen, this is the Slow Life League. Everyone here wants to live calm and peaceful lives. This isn’t the place for violent people like you. Could you please leave?”

“Oh? Have you ever met someone who obediently departed after such a request?”

“Please leave while I am still asking nicely. If you don’t, terrible things are going to happen to you!”

“Hmm. Perhaps your advocacy for this kind of tranquil life has left you all too carefree. I do not know the minute details of this place, but is it not strange to you that an enemy should appear in your home base like this? You should be able to tell that I am your enemy at a glance. Furthermore, I have declared my intent to wipe out all life in this world. I am saying I will kill you and all of your monsters. Well, I suppose I can spare you for a short time in exchange for a mount.”

“Oh!” It seemed peace had really dulled their senses here. This may well have been the first time an enemy had appeared in their home base. The girl had totally missed that the UEG’s presence here was strange, but she was finally starting to realize how severe the situation was.

“Flappy! Stretchy! Barky!” At the girl’s shouts, three monsters leaped to her side to defend her. A large snake coiled around her, a lion began to roar, and a bird lifted into the air, emitting fire from its body.

“Aha. I thought there were no powerful individuals here, but you are the type to empower your subordinates, yes?”

“Do it!” At the girl’s command, the lion leaped forward faster than the eye could see as the bird unleashed a wave of flame.

“You seem stronger than that man earlier...but my apologies. This is naught but a minor diversion.” With beings like these, she could take their attacks head-on and not feel any pain. But that would be boring, so the UEG decided to fight back.

She created life suited to fighting off the monsters in front of her. This girl seemed skilled at controlling animals, so the UEG thought to fight her on her own terms. In front of the UEG appeared an enormous serpent with the head of a lion and a pair of wings. Normally it would make sense to create three creatures of her own against three opponents, but she didn’t want to go through the trouble, so she had mixed all of their traits into one.

The newly born creature howled. From the lion’s head came a beam of light, large enough to wipe out the entire farm. The local charging lion, hovering bird, coiled snake, and the girl they were protecting were all wiped out, leaving no trace behind.

“I came here searching for a mount, yet now I’ve annihilated almost all of them.”

The once-farm was now nothing more than a barren field. She could have adjusted her strength to make a better fight out of it, but right now she was on her way to find someone else, so she didn’t want to waste her time by being so precise.

“I suppose I will ride this, now that I have gone through the trouble of creating it...though perhaps I should have given more thought to how I would do so beforehand.” She could have remade it into a new shape if she’d wanted, but she preferred to accept her failures as they were. Life would be boring if everything went as planned.

“My apologies,” the lion said.

“Hm? You can speak?”

“Did you not create me that way?” the creature responded.

“I cannot say I gave it all that much thought.”

“Is that so?”

“Indeed. However, fear not. Even if your creation was but a whim, I will not dispose of you so easily. For now, I suppose you will need a name. How about Flastrarky?”

“I am most grateful for it.”

She had merely put together the names of the three monsters she had modeled this one after, but it appeared the creature had no complaints.

Flastrarky's body was that of a snake, and its head was that of a lion. On its back near its head were a pair of wings. The UEG climbed up to sit at the base of the wings.

"Let us go. Our destination is in that direction. However, do not go too fast. Only a little faster than a person can walk."

Flastrarky could likely reach their destination in an instant if he wanted to, but that would be no different than her teleporting there. It was a fairly roundabout way of doing things, but that was how she liked it.

Wriggling his body, Flastrarky started moving at a relatively slow speed as instructed. Making his way back to the road, he began going down it. As expected, riding him didn't feel particularly great, but it wasn't so bad that she couldn't handle it for a time.

"I really should have put more thought into your design if I was going to ride you."

"If you are unsatisfied, shall I change my form?"

"You are capable of such a thing?!"

"Umm...I am aware this may sound rather arrogant...but you did create me yourself, Lady UEG."

"For a creature I took the time to carefully craft, I would be fully aware of its capabilities, of course. But you were simply a spur of the moment thing. As such, I am not familiar with the extent of your abilities."

"I see. Understood."

"Either way, your current form is sufficient. We shall arrive at our destination soon enough."

After passing through the tranquil farmland, they came upon a forest. The powerful being the UEG sensed was within those trees. She was making no attempt to hide herself, so if her target had any ability to perceive enemies, it likely knew she was coming. However, she detected no movement from it.

"Hmm. Perhaps it is simply that confident in itself. How intriguing." At the edge of the forest, the UEG dismounted. "I shall continue alone. Your role here is finished."

"Shall I wait here for you?" Flastrarky asked.

"You may wander at will, killing anyone you encounter. Before doing so, inform them that you are a servant of the UEG, who will wipe out all life in this world."

"Understood." Flastrarky then vanished. It seemed intent to carry out her

instructions as fast as possible.

The UEG continued down the road into the forest. The trees grew densely packed together. After walking for a while, she found a large wooden sign. On it was written the text “Delivery Service Members Only.” Of course, she paid the warning no mind, walking casually past the sign.

As she continued, the sounds of the forest around her went quiet. Everything she should have heard from the wildlife all around her ceased. At some point, the forest had become dead. The trees were withered, and there wasn’t a single moving creature.

Thinking it was strange, the UEG inspected her surroundings more closely. There were no larger animals around, but there were no insects, microbes, or even bacteria around either. She was the only living thing in the forest.

As she continued, she came across another sign. It said, “Leave Deliveries Here. Absolutely No Entry.” In front of the sign was a stone table, likely intended to take the deliveries it spoke of.

“Securing foodstuffs would appear to be a challenge in this environment.”

She figured this must have been for whoever lived here to acquire food. Beings who were close to godhood didn’t need food, though, so she may have been off the mark.

As before, she ignored the sign and continued forward. She soon came upon a large wooden mansion. She could detect the powerful being’s presence within. Despite the size of its residence, it appeared to live alone.

“Now then, what shall I do? Seeing their response to blowing away the structure all at once could be interesting...but I suppose I would like to meet them face to face first.” If she killed the person inside by accident, they’d never know what crime they were being punished for.

The UEG opened the door of the mansion. Inside was an entrance hall, leading to a staircase, which she immediately ascended. Walking through the second floor, she opened the door at the end of the hallway and entered the room.

It appeared to be a bedroom, inside of which was a young boy wearing pajamas, sleeping on a bed. This boy must have been her target. He was sound asleep, so hadn’t noticed her.

“I am impressed you were unmoved by my approach. Your arrogance is remarkable.” The UEG stepped up to the boy and shook him. “Hey!

Awaken!”

“What?” The boy woke up and sighed, clearly unhappy as he sat up. “Who are you? Didn’t you see the signs? You’re not supposed to come in here.”

“I care little for what you’ve written.”

“I wrote that because it’s dangerous for people to come here. I was trying to be nice. Please don’t act so arrogant. It’ll make me angry.” His eyes were open, but he still seemed half asleep. Though he had warned her against making him angry, the spaced-out way he was talking leeched much of the threat from his voice.

“I am the UEG. I have come to wipe out all life in this world. As such, you will have to die.”

“You’re the kind of person who never listens, aren’t you?” the boy asked.

“That depends on my mood. I have come all the way out here, though, so I might as well listen if you have something to say.”

“This is kind of a pain, so I’d rather you just left, but do you know who I am?”

“I cannot say that I do, beyond knowing you are the strongest member of the Slow Life League, so I have come here to deal with you personally. I will deal with the others afterwards.”

“Listen, I don’t want to kill anyone. That’s why I’m living a peaceful life out here on my own. Can’t you leave me alone?”

“Oh? So you have no desire to fight?” the UEG asked.

“None at all. So hurry up and leave before you make me angry and I have to kill you.”

“Your motivation is irrelevant. But killing you while you sit in bed with a stupid expression is hardly entertaining. Let us go outside.”

The UEG blew away the roof of the house and moved the two of them outside, forcing the boy to his feet ten meters away from her. She hadn’t intended it as an attack, so he was still unharmed. She had just moved him.

Apparently not understanding what had just happened, he stood there, mouth agape. “More than angry...I’m just surprised.”

“If you require some preparation, I do not mind waiting, but if you waste my time by saying you wish not to fight, I will begin immediately.”

“Okay, but can I explain first?”

“Very well.”

“My power is to inflict instant death on anything just by thinking it. The moment I think to kill someone, they instantly die. It won’t really be a fight at all. Are you sure you want to do this? It will just be suicide for you,” the boy explained as if it was all just too much trouble.

Chapter 14 — So He Killed the Previous Situation?

“Oh? Then why have you not used that power?” the UEG asked. “I have interrupted your slumber. Does that not make you wish to kill me? I would have long ago killed someone for such an offense.”

“Like I said, I’m more surprised than anything,” the boy responded. “But I am starting to get annoyed. I try to avoid killing people as much as possible. That’s why I live all the way out here. So please leave before I can’t hold back anymore.”

“Well, well. What an unstable power. Judging from the scenery, it seems you have been killing everything around you.”

“I’m aware of that. Even with people I like, there are cases where I accidentally kill them if my emotions run too high. I’m sick of it.”

The sound of animals walking around or birds chirping was annoying. The sound of bugs was irritating. Mold and germs were dirty and gross. His power must have activated in response to those feelings. With just the barest thought, those things had all died.

“But I have already declared my intent to fight you,” the UEG continued. “If you believe you are capable, then kill me as well.”

“I told you, I don’t want to kill anyone.”

“Then allow me to try to change your mind.” The UEG stretched a hand upward, creating a ball of light in the air. The slowly growing sphere contained enough energy to vaporize a human being in an instant. Of course, she was going slowly on purpose. If all she was interested in was attacking, she didn’t need any preparation. Just as this boy claimed to be capable of doing, she could kill him with a thought if she wanted to. This was a plain attempt to provoke him. “Take this.”

As the sphere grew to twenty meters across in size, the UEG swung her arm down. In response, the light began to move, creeping closer to the boy at a pace anyone could see, on a trajectory that would strike the mansion behind

him if he dodged it.

"Now then, I have managed to unleash an attack before you killed me. How will you respond?"

"All I have to do is kill it." The sphere of light suddenly vanished. "I can kill anything I want. I can kill a dangerous-looking ball of light if I want to."

"Then how about this?" The earth behind the boy erupted, shooting towards him in the form of a large spear. If he couldn't see the attack coming, he shouldn't have been able to choose to kill it. However, the spear crumbled to dust before it reached him.

"It doesn't matter what you can do. I am killing anything dangerous to me. Things like surprise attacks or invisible poisons don't work on me. It doesn't matter if I can perceive them or not; I kill anything dangerous to me."

"You kill the danger itself, do you? That is an awfully vague ability. I am curious about how you determine what is a danger to you if you do not even have to perceive it."

"Who knows? I've never thought that much about it. But you should understand by now, right? You can't kill me. Just give up and go home."

"I see. I understand the depth of your confidence now. I suppose I will have to attack you directly. Then you will have no choice but to attack me back, yes?"

"What is wrong with you? Can't you just leave me alone?"

"If you are so irritated, why not take it out on me? You live out here alone because you cannot control yourself. Hurry up and use that arrogant, egoistic power against me." The UEG stepped up in front of the boy. When nothing happened, she reached forward and grabbed him by the throat. When nothing happened after that, she began to squeeze.

"This is your final warning. Let go of me or you'll die."

"Hurry up and kill me, then. The battle has already begun." She slowly squeezed tighter. At first the boy still seemed quite relaxed, but he was gradually starting to look more and more concerned. Her grip grew tighter and tighter, and the boy's complexion started to worsen. "What is wrong? Doing nothing at this point goes far beyond pacifism. Or is it that you have already been using your power to kill me?"

"Wh-What? How?"

The UEG was holding back, making sure not to kill him immediately. Though she had no intention of sparing him, she was being extremely slow at

increasing the tightness of her grip, to the point it was hard to notice the change.

“Surprise is all well and good, but perhaps you should be celebrating? After killing so many unintentionally, you have finally found someone you cannot even kill on purpose.”

“Why...won’t you die?!”

“Hmm. In truth, I felt some power attempting to affect me. That is likely your power to inflict instant death, but...what is death, anyway? Do you understand what it means to make someone die?” The boy didn’t respond. It was likely he had never given such deep thought to his own ability. “In my opinion, death is no more than a change in the state of the physical material making up a creature. Life is simply the name we give to the situation of numerous infinitesimal materials coming together and coincidentally giving birth to consciousness. Life and death are simply the movement, or lack thereof, of that structure.”

“So...what?”

“As such, if your power is to cause that structure to cease its movement, the answer is simple. If it has been made to cease, it only needs to be made to move again.” The UEG just needed to keep her body in a living state. From the beginning, the body she now inhabited was an improvised, temporary vessel, so it wasn’t that much of an issue if it died anyway. “Now then, if we have reached a stalemate, I can put an end to this for you if you like. Though we can speak further if you wish.”

As the UEG wondered whether they had any more to discuss, the boy suddenly vanished. Though a moment prior she had been strangling him, her hands now hung at her sides. Seeing the destroyed mansion was back to normal, she immediately understood the situation.

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“So he killed the previous situation, making it so it never occurred? In that case, he should be inside the mansion.”

In a way, it was like he had reverted time to just before she had entered the building. If he was trying to protect himself, it would have been better to go further, but maybe his power wasn’t unlimited. It appeared he could only go back so far in time by killing it.

“Hmm. I see the limits of your power now. There is no need to play along anymore.” The UEG reached forward as if grabbing at the empty space. The boy appeared in her grip. The roof of the mansion behind him was gone once again, perfectly recreating the situation as it had been.

“How?!”

“I understand your power. You killed the situation prior, so I have revived it. You ‘cut’ the scene we were in, but it remained saved in the system’s memory, so I simply ‘pasted’ it. Or perhaps more simply, I hit the ‘redo’ button.”

“But...but how...”

“I am a god. Something of this caliber is no difficulty.” Though she wasn’t omnipotent or omniscient, since no such being existed, she could do more or less anything she set her mind to. She could create life, rewind time, or change fate. Of course, she wouldn’t do something boring like wield all those powers from the start. She would always limit herself based on her opponent to make the fight interesting. “I will not allow the same thing again, but if you have any other ploys, by all means try them. I will simply continue like this.”

As she spoke, she began tightening her grip faster. Her interest was beginning to fade, finding this to be a waste of time.

“Oh? I see you have changed your approach. You are now attempting to kill the very concept of my being. Of course, killing this vessel means little, so that is the correct path to take, but is it something you are capable of? Underhanded tactics like killing the concept of a person only works if you alone are capable of doing it. If we are both capable, then it becomes a simple contest of strength.”

With a dull sound, the boy’s neck snapped. The UEG threw his motionless body to the ground.

“Dead, is he? I expected something like ‘killing his own death,’ but it appears he was not as sturdy as I thought.” Either he was incapable of it or

had never considered it. She had hoped he would hold out a little longer so she could make him despair even more, but now she was just disappointed.

"If the strongest here is dead, I have no use for the rest. Perhaps I will borrow Euphemia's style of cleaning up."

Her recently added subordinate, Euphemia, made declarations to the entire city before exterminating the residents as a group. Starting to get bored, the UEG considered doing the same.

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Chapter 15 — Even Though I Powered Up, I Lost It All Before Having a Chance to Show My Awakened Abilities

Just outside one of Suudoria Academy's dorms was the Sage Van and the newly enrolled first-year student, Hanakawa. The cafeteria had been destroyed, so they had stepped outside to see what was going on.

"This is a pretty big deal, huh?" Van said, staring up at the sky.

"No, no, no, this is not a situation where you can afford to be so flippant! This is a terrible disaster, is it not?!" cried Hanakawa.

It was possible the giant squid thing was just passing by and would be on its way after inflicting this damage. Hanakawa had hoped that would be the case, but he was clearly wrong.

The squid had descended onto the Academy and begun wreaking havoc. Grabbing onto a building, it was using its tentacles to smash everything around it and move slowly between the buildings. Though it seemed to move with a sense of dignified pride at first, it suddenly started attacking without warning. It would knock over buildings, crush them, pick them up, and throw them away. The ten tentacles each moved independently in a masterful display, laying waste to the city without getting tangled.

"This has turned out far different than I expected. Are there not a huge number of powerful students at the academy?" Hanakawa had expected the skilled students to annihilate an intruder immediately, but the creature continued its rampage unmolested. It didn't seem like anyone was fighting back.

"It looks like they're trying."

"How so?"

"Hmm...like over there?" Van pointed to a building some distance away. A number of students were arrayed on the rooftop, launching attacks at random. Light, fire, lightning, and rocks were being shot towards the squid,

but none of them reached it. The attacks all vanished long before hitting their target.

"It seems like it's nullifying all attacks made with the Battlesong system. Most students here will be useless against it."

"I have given some thought to this ability to nullify other abilities before. Even if such abilities are nullified, one would expect rocks thrown using that power to still work...though it appears they do not." The students were also throwing rubble from the destroyed buildings at the squid, but after making it close to the target, the debris would drop to the ground.

"Yeah, it's nullifying the acceleration that their powers give the objects."

"If someone's power enabled them to become extraordinarily muscular, could they use that muscle to throw projectiles at it?"

"That would also be nullified somehow."

"That is hard to accept. I do not understand the logic..."

"Just assume that it nullifies everything."

"Is that not an Aggressor? Is it not your turn to intervene?"

The main role of the Sages was to fight off the Aggressors. The Sages interacted with society in all sorts of ways, but that was generally little more than a hobby for them.

"That's a relic that's existed in this world from the start. If it didn't come from outside the world, it's out of my jurisdiction."

"Then what do we do?"

"Run away, of course. Sorry, but it looks like I can't help you anymore. If you survive, let's meet again someday."

"Huh? Wait, Sir Van, are you not quite strong? As a student of Suudoria Academy, did you not say this was trouble for you as well? Even if it is not an Aggressor, should you not help to fend it off?"

"Yeah, well, my power relies on Battlesong too. I'm not good at fighting enemies like that. Its nullification field is pretty big, almost a kilometer wide. If I get caught in that, it'll be really hard to escape."

"Then what should I do?"

"Do your best to survive." With those words, Van disappeared.

"Hey! If you claim you are trying to help me, then stick with it until the end!"

But complaining to the empty air accomplished nothing. Hanakawa needed to think of how to deal with this situation, and there wasn't much time

to do so.

“That is right. I should start by attempting to escape!” He had no idea what the squid’s objective was, but his best bet was to get away from it. If he got caught up in its nullification field, he’d be weaker than an average human. If that happened, he’d have to be even more careful, since he would be unable to use skills.

“Hmm. Is moving away from it truly sufficient? Remaining outdoors seems to be the more intelligent decision...”

As he said that, Hanakawa stepped back into the cafeteria. The second-year student Ingrid should have still been there. If he didn’t understand what was going on, it would be best to stick with her, but the cafeteria was now empty.

“Of course! Naturally she would ignore me and flee on her own!”

Feeling somewhat unsatisfied, Hanakawa decided to run. First he would make his way to the main road. That would take him a little closer to the giant squid, but he wasn’t familiar with the city. If he tried to navigate the back alleys, he’d get lost immediately.

When he made it to the main street, he found a large crowd of students running. At first he thought they were running away, but it seemed like they were heading towards the squid. Looking down the street, he could see the monster still rampaging. Most students were choosing not to flee, but to fight.

Though that was impressive in its own way, Hanakawa thought it was more foolhardy than anything else. They were likely all confident in their own abilities. They thought of themselves as the protagonist in situations like this and figured if they faced the challenge head-on, they would somehow persevere.

“Ha! I will still flee, though!” Hanakawa turned away from the giant squid and ran. “Oh! Perhaps because I am over level 500, or because I am now a Monk, I have become significantly faster!” A single step sent him flying forward at a tremendous speed. He felt it would be easy enough to escape, but his confidence soon failed. Suddenly, he lost strength in his legs and tripped over himself.

“What... What happened?!” Hanakawa checked his stats, wondering if he had suffered some sort of status effect. The status window was grayed out, showing a large “Invalid” label.

“Invalid?! Does that mean my abilities are being nullified?! Am I within

the squid's nullification field?!"

Looking behind him, he saw the beast approaching. Unsurprisingly, the students weren't capable of slowing it down. Despite their unfailing trust in their own abilities, they were helpless to stop the tentacles from grabbing them and throwing them into its mouth.

"It is the kind that eats people?!" Hanakawa stood up and began running again, but this time much more slowly. With the stats granted by the Battlesong system suppressed, he was just a fat high school student.

He quickly ran out of breath, his legs began to cramp, and his sides began to hurt. But a little bit of pain didn't mean he could stop. That would mean death. No matter how much it hurt, he had to keep moving.

"I can't...keep going..." Hanakawa heaved. "Even though I powered up, I lost it all before having a chance to show my awakened abilities..."

The squid continued to move down the main street, destroying buildings as it went. It seemed it would catch up with him, but luckily there were plenty of other reckless students getting in its way. The squid seemed happy to eat whatever was closest. It needed its tentacles to move as well, so only five were available to secure its food, limiting it to capturing five students at a time. In short, Hanakawa had some time before he'd be the next target.

"B-But where should I even run? I did not even have a chance to trigger the guided tour event! I have no idea what is in the city!"

For now, his only option was to try and get out of the nullification field. After that, hide from the squid. But he had long since run out of stamina. Though he felt like he was running, he was moving at more or less a walking pace. The other students were finally starting to realize there was nothing they could do and started running past him.

"This is...getting...dangerous... I will soon...be the closest..." Turning to look was a waste of time now, but still he did. Though he had no idea why, Ingrid had collapsed behind him. "Why are you here?!"

There was no way the super-confident Ingrid, so determined to train him, would run away from a mysterious enemy like this. She must have left the cafeteria to go fight the bizarre monster.

"Surely...there is no need for me to rescue her? There is nothing I could do to help..."

But without their powers, they were just an ordinary boy and girl. In this situation, Hanakawa should have been the stronger of the two.

“Ah! However, I cannot forget that rescuing her may be my one chance to gain popularity! Even if doing so does not lead to people liking me, it should at least prevent them from utterly despising me! Ingrid, are you okay?!” Hanakawa made his way over to her.

“First-Year Hanakawa...it seems I’ve shown you a disgraceful side of myself.”

“Stand for now. It has the ability to nullify our powers, so the likes of us have no chance against it.”

“It appears that way. I totally let my guard down. How pathetic of me.”

Hanakawa offered Ingrid his hand, which she took without hesitating, pulling herself to her feet.

“I believe our only option is to flee. Are you aware of a good location we might evacuate to?”

“Running in a straight line seems like a bad idea. Heading underground might be our best bet.” Ingrid pointed at the manhole in the street ahead of them. The cover was lying beside it, meaning someone else had likely already gone down.

“I see. It does not appear the tentacles can reach through, so we may be able to escape.” Of course, a hit from the tentacles would make the street collapse on top of them, but the squid didn’t seem interested in doing that. It was only looking for food. It was a bit of a gamble, but their chances seemed fairly good. “Then let us go. Can you walk?”

“I seem to have sprained my ankle, but I will manage.”

“Allow me to assist you, then. As long as you do not mind touching filthy swine like myself.”

“Very...well. I am not worried about such a thing, but either way, you should not debase yourself so.”

Ingrid leaned on Hanakawa. Normally Hanakawa would instinctively say something gross about how she felt or smelled, but in a situation as dangerous as this, even he didn’t have the composure to do so.

The two of them made their way towards the manhole, the sound of crumbling buildings and screaming students resounding behind them. The ten meters they needed to cross seemed almost insurmountable.

“Only a little farther. It should take us only a few more seconds.”

“First-Year Hanakawa!”

He turned around at Ingrid’s cry. The squid was right behind them. It had

run out of targets and was now reaching for them.

Hanakawa mustered what little strength he had and threw Ingrid. She tumbled forward, falling down the manhole. That may have been dangerous too, but it was better than being eaten by the squid. The tentacle wrapped itself around him. Though it wasn't being particularly gentle, it seemed it wanted to avoid injuring him before throwing him into its mouth.

"Ah! Why am I trying to play cool now?! I cannot use my skills, so this will actually be the end for me!"

The squid tossed Hanakawa into its mouth.

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Chapter 16 — We Don’t Plan On Killing You. Now Hand Over the Treasure

In simple terms, the squid that Van had called an ancient relic was a kind of biological weapon that people could ride inside of and control. Since Yogiri had never explained it to him, Hanakawa was unaware of that, but it was the same giant squid that had attacked Yogiri and Tomochika aboard the cruise ship on their way to the eastern nation of Ent. The same pirates who had used it back then were now using it to attack again.

“Boss! What are you doing?!” a clearly low-ranking member of the crew called out to the woman in the control seat.

“Good question. It’s rampaging around on its own.” The woman wearing men’s clothes and speaking as if she had nothing to do with what was happening was Degul, the leader of the pirates. No matter how she moved the helm or stepped on the pedals, the squid didn’t respond. They didn’t really understand how it worked, so they didn’t know how to stop it or take back control in case of emergency. Degul felt like there wasn’t much point panicking about it, though.

“Did you feed it?” she asked.

“We did, but this is the first time it’s ever flown. It may have consumed more energy than expected in order to do so.”

The squid was smashing all the buildings around it, grabbing the people inside, and throwing them into its mouth. Normally it rested underwater, and so was fed seafood. It had never acted on its own to get food, so they didn’t worry too much about it, but apparently it would do so if forced to the point of starvation.

“It should stop once it’s full. Nothing we can do but wait ’til then.”

“Well...I guess this is just some foreign country in the sky...”

If this was some nation or organization they had a connection with, there might be some reason to panic, but Degul didn’t feel that guilty about attacking this mysterious city floating in the sky. Besides, they were pirates.

Pillaging was their bread and butter. Their ride may have been rampaging and destroying things on its own, but the most Degul thought was that it was a waste it was destroying so much they could have stolen.

"I was planning on attacking them anyway, but I was hoping we'd have more time to investigate and prepare. After a blatant attack like this, they'll be much more on guard next time."

"True. I doubt they never expected people from below to attack them. There must have been a more effective way for us to attack than this."

Degul's group of pirates had used the large squid-shaped relic for their piracy numerous times. While doing so, they had found wing-like parts that could be added onto it. Once added, they'd given the squid the ability to fly. When they had tried testing the new function out, they had found an entirely new world above them. Everyone knew there were islands floating in the sky, but they hadn't known there were cities or people on them.

At first, they had been excited to find fresh hunting grounds, but then the squid had suddenly gone into a frenzy. This had just been a test flight, so they had minimal crew on board. They'd had no intention of actually attacking.

"Either way, looks like my power's working. Actually, doesn't it look like we'll be able to wipe them out at this rate?"

The ability to nullify others' powers came not from the squid but from Degul herself. She could nullify any powers within a set distance. She could only do that to special skills in this world, so they'd be defenseless against something like cannons, but it seemed the city relied entirely on skills to defend itself.

"Is that how we do things?"

"Yes, depending on the situation. Normally, if they hand over the loot, there's no reason to kill them...but we've already attacked them. If we just say, 'We don't plan on killing you; hand over the treasure,' do you think they'll comply?"

"Yeah...I guess we've basically declared war on them."

"Right? Even if we had no intention of fighting, we can't avoid it now. It's already started. We gotta go all in at this point."

Their guess that flying took more energy than usual seemed correct, as the squid began using its tentacles to grab onto the buildings around them. Some were being used to pull itself between the buildings, while others were destroying the buildings and grabbing the people inside. It must have been

extremely hungry, as it was proactively throwing people into its mouth. There were no signs of it stopping anytime soon.

"Uhh. We're gonna have to fly again to get back to the hideout, aren't we?" Degul said.

"Looks that way."

"Is it gonna do the same thing there?"

"Maybe we can get it to eat enough here that it doesn't have to."

"Can it store that much?"

"Before we left, the energy gauge was at about two-fifths. It's around one-fifth now."

"So you *didn't* feed it."

"We feed it plenty before we launch an attack. We were only planning on testing if the flight worked this time."

"I guess we just have to deal with the situation at hand. We'll let it eat 'til it's full."

To the enormous squid, individual humans were tiny as food. If they let it eat until it was full, the city would be effectively wiped out, but that was none of Degul's concern.

Passing between the buildings, it made it to something like a main street. There was a crowd of young people wearing identical uniforms there. It seemed they were attempting to fight off the creature but were starting to realize they couldn't use their powers.

"Like fish in a barrel, huh?"

The squid reached out with its tentacles, grabbing people from everywhere and throwing them into its mouth. With no skills, weapons, or resolve to fight back, those below were no match for it. The squid continued down the road as it ate, and no one emerged to stop it. Even the people without uniforms just milled around helplessly, showing no sign of resistance.

"But this is kind of boring. Can we not get control back soon?"

"We're now at over half a tank, so the feeding shouldn't be so urgent anymore. Maybe it's just having fun."

"That's no good for a vehicle or a weapon. It's too unstable. I'll have to reconsider how we use this thing from now on."

"Yes, it doesn't appear suited to more delicate operations. We didn't give it much thought before."

“No one would have expected something like this—oh, I have control again.” Degul had adopted an “in for a penny, in for a pound” attitude, deciding to let the squid continue eating people. Using a tentacle, she reached for a girl in front of her, but before she could grab her, the fat boy beside the girl threw her into a hole in the road. With a shrug, Degul grabbed the boy instead and tossed him into the squid’s mouth.

“I guess it won’t eat on its own anymore?”

“Looks that way. It won’t digest anything unless you press the ‘convert’ button.”

Now that the squid was under control, it wouldn’t eat of its own volition. Degul reached for the “convert” button, but before she could grab it, she was thrown from her chair and into the wall. She lost all sense of where she was. The impact was so strong that she blacked out for a moment, an experience she had never felt before.

“Ugh...Boss!” her subordinate said, picking himself up off the floor beside her.

The squid had been knocked onto its side. The control room was designed to stay level no matter which way the rest of the squid moved, but the impact had been so strong that it had shaken the room anyway.

“What? What happened?” Degul rose unsteadily to her feet and made her way back to the control seat. She brought the squid back upright and checked their surroundings. A dark shadow stood beside them. Roughly the same size as the squid, it was a horned, winged giant. Its body was covered in black metal, and it had six arms and glowing red eyes. It was taking a defensive stance, content to stare at them.

“Makes sense. My power won’t stop a huge thing like that from punching us.”

“Boss! What do we do?!”

“If I can’t nullify it, we’re in a bad spot.”

Deciding they were outmatched, she moved to action immediately, deploying the squid’s wings and retreating into the sky. The strange giant had wings of its own, so she thought it might pursue them, but it showed no sign of moving.

The squid flew over the city walls and into the open sky. Each of the floating islands had a similar barrier around it. Degul’s powers could nullify the barrier and allow her to pass through, but it seemed some special method

was required to get through it otherwise. In short, they could assume no one would chase them.

"That was kind of dangerous. Was it some sort of devil?"

"Boss, I'm glad we got away, but we shouldn't keep flying like this." They could see the energy gauge dropping in real time. Hovering in the air wasn't going to be possible for long.

"Good point. Let's find another island to land on."

"We're not going home?!"

"If we're coming back here, we need to investigate more. We don't know anything yet. Let's see. How about one of those islands without any large cities on it? Let's snatch two or three people from there and see what we can learn from them."

"I'm not sure about this..."

Ignoring the doubtful look on her subordinate's face, Degul pushed the squid towards another of the islands.

◇ ◇ ◇

Tired of her own strength, Suudoria had created the Suudoria Academy, a school whose aim was to raise someone powerful enough to defeat Suudoria herself. She had planned to wait until that person was born, but the wait proved unbearably long. While there were certainly some promising results, the growth was far too slow.

So Suudoria decided to reincarnate herself. Skipping past the slow progress in the present, she aimed at the far future. In order to be reborn, she would be dead for a time. For an immortal being like Suudoria, death was impossible, but she could use a ritual to force herself to be reborn at a later date. For her, it was akin to a long sleep.

As planned, a few thousand years later, she was born again as a child of two teachers in the academy. She had been worried about whether the school would survive that long, so she was relieved to see it had continued to develop without issue. Through research and innovation, the students were gaining considerable power.

But there was an entirely different problem. For some reason the school had been moved to a strange continent, was at war with other organizations, and no one could leave it. The reason for these changes hadn't survived the

passage of time. At some point things had changed here, and now the students thought that was just the way the world worked.

Suudoria found that to be interesting in and of itself. She had chosen to create this school and be reincarnated because she had grown tired of her own strength. A situation so far beyond what she had imagined was plenty stimulating, and the idea of living as a student for a while wasn't that bad. She hadn't lost any of her powers after being reincarnated, and in fact they had grown over time, but she decided to suppress that power and live as a normal child.

Little by little she released her latent powers to match the children around her, allowing herself to smoothly pass through elementary school, middle school, and finally make her way into the high school that made up Suudoria Academy proper.

First, she intended to live as a first-year student, using more and more of her power as necessary once she was sent out into combat. She soon grew attached to her school life and lost the will to fight her fellow students. The entire endeavor had been an attempt to create worthy rivals, so refusing to fight them defeated the purpose somewhat, but luckily there were plenty of powerful enemies in the academy's rival organizations. Apparently, the third-year students of the academy, known as L units, had absolutely absurd levels of power. She didn't expect similar levels of power from the other organizations, but she would be happy if they were strong enough for her to use some real power against them.

One day, something from beyond the walls appeared. It was a giant squid. It began to destroy the school and attack the students. Sitting in the cafeteria at the time, Suudoria was immediately wrapped up in it.

"I'm sure they'll be able to handle it," she had thought to herself after stepping outside and sizing up the intruder, but the students had been unexpectedly powerless to stop it. The squid had nullified their skills and magic, making them unable to take any countermeasures against it.

"It seems they have come to rely on Battlesong too much."

The Battlesong system hadn't existed in Suudoria's time. Someone had come here and added it to the world to make it easier for people to gain powers. She felt there was nothing wrong with using the tools that were available and so had used the system as well, and for the most part had had no issues with it, but it prevented one from wielding power greater than the

system's limits and could be nullified by a power like the one they now faced.

"I feel as if I have seen that squid somewhere before." She remembered encountering a similar thing before her reincarnation. The humans of her time had created biological weapons to fight against the Demon Lord Suudoria. As it was unrelated to the Battlesong system, it was unlikely the squid was responsible for nullifying the weapons back then. If this was instead a power being wielded by the controller of the squid, that made it a problematic combination. It could nullify the powers of the Battlesong system and thus become immune to them, making it an insurmountable threat to the people of this era who relied entirely upon the Gift.

"Good grief. I suppose I'll help." She couldn't stand idly by while the school she had founded and come to love was trampled. She wanted to continue hiding her powers and enjoying her school life, but at this rate the academy would be wiped out. For the first time since her rebirth, she used her true power. Floating up into the sky, she gathered the magical energy in the air around her, solidifying it into a new body.

Magic that didn't stem from Battlesong wouldn't be nullified by the squid, but it probably wouldn't have much effect on it either. The creature had a reasonable level of magic resistance and could automatically repair most damage done to it. She figured overwhelming physical force was likely a more suitable solution.

It took a little time, but she eventually created a body large enough to match the squid's. Then, while the beast was absorbed in its feeding frenzy, she punched it as hard as she could from the side. It was sent flying, knocking over more buildings. The damage to the city was increasing, but that was preferable to the enormous cost of life resulting from letting the creature rampage freely.

"Normally there are people riding inside of it, right?"

The shock of the impact had gone through the creature, so no matter how strong its armor, those within likely hadn't survived the blow unscathed. The squid slowly lifted itself off the ground. Its movements seemed somewhat awkward, showing that her attack had had an effect.

"However, it is probably better to slice it apart—"

A slashing attack would likely be more effective than blunt force. As she decided to create a sword, the squid suddenly jumped into the air. She

watched in shock as it deployed transparent wings from its body and flew off into the sky.

It had run away. Was it better to let it flee or follow it and finish it off? As she hesitated, the monster vanished. It had disappeared as it passed through the barrier surrounding the academy. It was either capable of ignoring the borders or it had some sort of ability to teleport. Either way, there was no way she could pursue it now.

"Oh well. I suppose I should focus on rebuilding the city. I will also need to think of a way to fend off that creature if it returns—"

"There is no need for that. You and all the residents of this island will now be exterminated!"

A young girl was standing in front of Suudoria. Wearing a simple white robe, she was the same size as Suudoria's enormous form. "I am the UEG! All denizens of this world are guilty of locking me away here! As such, I will exterminate you all! Resist as you like! I do not mind playing for a bit, but I am not very patient! If you wish to fight, make it quick!"

The girl's voice echoed throughout the academy.

Chapter 17 — If You Have Never Tasted Defeat, Then Try and Claim Victory Here Too

“At any rate, I imagine it is obvious that you are my objective here.” The enormous girl wore a daring smile. It was likely she wasn’t actually a giant but rather had adjusted her size to match Suudoria’s.

“Oh? Are you saying you wish to fight me?” Suudoria asked.

“Indeed, but do not think so highly of yourself. I only happened to notice you due to your size and decided to play for a bit. I would have been just as content to engage in combat with that squid.”

“You sound like a fool, but I imagine you are serious, so I’ll have to defeat you here.”

Though the girl’s words were absurd, Suudoria could feel there was real strength in her. If left alone, she would likely be capable of destroying the world and would certainly wipe out the students in the school.

“If you are capable of entertaining me, then please do. I will wait, so feel free to unleash your full strength.”

“Oh, you can tell I am holding back?”

“I, too, am continuously suppressing my strength. It was obvious enough you were doing the same.”

“I see. Then I will accept your offer.” Suudoria released her power. It would add to the damage to the city around her, but she decided there was no other option. Releasing the magic making up her enormous body, she reabsorbed it and returned to her true form. As the layered seals binding her power came undone, the magical energy flooding out of her began to melt the stones of the buildings and roads around her.

That was why Suudoria kept her power suppressed. Even if she wasn’t using it for anything, the energy that unconsciously leaked out of her would destroy her surroundings. There was no way she could pretend to be an

ordinary student now.

“So you have shrunk again? After all the effort I went through to match your size.” As she spoke, the UEG also shrank back down to the size of an ordinary girl.

“This is a tenth of my true power. Do you still think you will be a match for me?”

“I wonder. I suspect you should release all your power at once, though.”

“You can say that once you have survived this.” Suudoria unleashed a wave of magical energy behind her, launching her forward in a straight line at the UEG and swinging her right fist.

The UEG caught the punch in one hand. “There. I have survived. What is next?”

“I see. Then I will go a little stronger.” Suudoria poured energy into her fist and released it all at once. The magical energy turned into light, gushing out with a tremendous heat. The compressed beam of light tore a line through the city. Of course, since she was still holding on to that hand, the UEG couldn’t survive unscathed. The majority of her body was erased, leaving nothing more than her feet.

“I suppose that’s how it goes. Once I use a bit of my real strength, no one can keep up.” Suudoria was almost disappointed. She had thought this might have ended up being an actual fight, but it had ended so abruptly.

“Oh? So you are one of those who laments their own strength?” A voice came from the lingering left foot of the UEG. Flesh expanded from that foot, regenerating her entire body. Suudoria could have attacked her during the regeneration, but she decided to wait. The process was finished in no time, and even her clothing had been reconstituted.

“Yes,” Suudoria replied. “I have never known defeat. Honestly, I have begun to think life would be happier if I found some other motivation for living than the thrill of battle.”

“Perhaps you would fit in better at the Slow Life League.”

“Are you suggesting I defect?”

“That would be impossible. After all, I have just come from annihilating the Slow Life League and that kingdom of monsters.”

“Oh? I must admit, I do not know how strong they were.” Suudoria had never once stepped outside after being reincarnated at the academy. The school rules forbade anyone from going out, except for high school students

on combat training exercises. She had never been able to witness the strength of the other factions.

"No matter. If you wish to know defeat, I will teach it to you. Though it will result in your death, so you will not have time to wallow in it."

"Do you have any idea how many times I have heard those words? If you act so high and mighty, you may just embarrass yourself."

"Let us begin with this, then."

Suudoria's vision went black. A moment too late she realized she had been struck in the face, warm blood pouring from her nose. It had been an ordinary jab. The UEG had delivered a straight punch so fast Suudoria hadn't been able to track it with her eyes.

"You seem specialized in melee combat," the UEG observed, "so I will engage you there."

"I am specialized in anything I like, but if you wish to settle this with blows, I am happy to oblige you." Suudoria returned with a punch of her own, which the UEG dodged with an exaggerated motion. Looking closer, she had slid to the side without moving her feet. "Are you not interested in doing this properly?" Suudoria asked as she dodged the counterstrike.

"As long as the form is proper, the rest does not matter."

"Your form not being proper is the issue!"

Punch. Dodge. Kick. Dodge. Their movements gradually accelerated, growing stronger and stronger. With neither of them able to land a decisive blow, it seemed the battle would go on forever. However, Suudoria soon realized something was wrong. Neither of them were fighting at full strength. The fight would be decided once one of them reached their limit. Suudoria had plenty of strength left to spare, but she was beginning to feel her movements growing dull.

Her nose hadn't stopped bleeding. Blood still dripped from her face, making it harder to breathe. She had rarely ever been wounded, but bleeding like this should have stopped almost immediately. Her endurance and regenerative capabilities were immense. Though it had never happened before, if her body were annihilated all at once, she would regenerate the entire thing in an instant. She wasn't a being chained to a physical body. She was capable of changing the body that was her vessel at will and could even create multiple such vessels at the same time if she wished. However, the bleeding wouldn't stop and her breathing was starting to grow ragged.

“So you have finally noticed?” the UEG said, still exchanging blows. “Saying you are impossible to defeat when you never grow tired and regenerate instantly leaves something to be desired, so I have suppressed those abilities of yours.”

“That is impossible!”

“Feel free to believe what you wish. The truth is your injuries will no longer heal. Moving will deplete your stamina, and lost body parts will never return. So how about it? If you have never tasted defeat, then try and claim victory here too.”

Suudoria hadn’t noticed anything happening to her. There shouldn’t have been any way to block her powers. But even so, she couldn’t bring herself to say she was at full strength. There was clearly something wrong. The bizarre new situation caused her to lose her composure, her movements slowing enough that the UEG was able to land a hit and take off her right arm.

With the balance of offense and defense between them shattered, the fight was over almost immediately. A kick took out her right leg, knocking her to the ground, after which the UEG stomped on her left arm and crushed it.

“There you go. The defeat you have so longed for. Are you satisfied?” the UEG asked, looking down proudly at her victim.

“No way. This is...impossible.”

“Hm? How strange. Did you not wish to do battle? Were you not sick of your continued success, longing for someone to come and defeat you? Why are you in such shock now? A powerful enemy has finally appeared. Should you not celebrate that? Is this first experience of defeat not refreshing for you?”

Suudoria couldn’t answer.

“I have met many of your like in the past. The majority are fools trying to act cool. They say they wish to know defeat, but never once actually believed it. The moment they come close to losing, they immediately begin begging for their life. How about you?”

“I-I...”

“Ah, I forgot. I have no desire to hear it. I have long grown tired of such answers.” The UEG made a show of lifting her foot up over Suudoria’s head.

The simple but elegant sole of her shoe was the last thing Suudoria ever saw.

◇ ◇ ◇

Yogiri and Tomochika stood facing two soldiers from Himeln. One was covered from head to toe in plate armor, while the other wore a tight-fitting white robe and called herself Childa.

Yogiri was getting fed up with this. They had finally reunited with Scott only to be interrupted by enemies again.

"Takatou, if Scott gets sent flying again, it'll be a huge pain."

"Yeah, I was thinking the same thing. I'll protect him this time."

"I realize it's nothing I've done, but sorry," Scott apologized.

Yogiri's unconscious protection only extended to Tomochika, so in order to protect Scott too, he would have to do it consciously. Scott was effectively immortal, so Yogiri didn't have to worry about him being in danger, but it would be hard for Scott to guide them around if they kept getting separated.

"Just to make sure, by revenge, you mean you are going to kill us, right?" Yogiri asked the woman in white.

"That's right."

"I told the others this too, but I only killed them because they attacked us. I don't know if that justifies your taking revenge."

"The cycle of revenge is so sad, isn't it? But if you die, the cycle will end, no?"

"Okay. We have places to be, so we're heading that way. If you follow us, I'll kill you. You've been warned. Scott, please take us to that settlement you mentioned." Yogiri decided there was no point in talking anymore.

"All right. This way."

They began walking again. The armored soldier followed them. Yogiri had thought they were trying to keep the soldier alive, but he had warned them. He used his power, and the soldier fell to the ground.

"Huh. What did you do to him?" Childa asked, but Yogiri kept walking. He was done with talking.

"Are you sure this is okay, Takatou?" Tomochika asked.

"Talking to people in this world never gets us anywhere."

"I'm well aware of that, but doesn't ignoring them completely make you feel a little guilty? We haven't really settled things properly."

"If we keep talking with them, more will come. I feel like it's better to just ignore them at this point."

“All right. I’ll try my best to do the same!”

“Umm, I’d really prefer you didn’t,” Childa called out to them. “You’re going to make me sad. Even if we’re going to kill each other in the end, there’s no reason we can’t get along until then.”

They ignored everything she said. However, despite the distance they had walked, she still sounded close by. Thinking she had followed them, Yogiri turned to look and found Childa right beside them.

“I didn’t follow you or anything. You just haven’t been going anywhere.” The armored soldier was still lying on the ground at her side. Yogiri highly doubted she had dragged him with her.

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“You know, since I can manipulate time, I can manipulate space as well. So I tried shrinking the space between us.”

“What does that even mean?!”

Tomochika was baffled. Yogiri didn’t much understand what was happening either.

Space and time are part of a single indivisible whole, so control over one may lead to control over the other, said Mokomoko. *But an opponent with such unlimited control may prove quite a nuisance.*

“So could you please answer my questions?” Childa asked. “I reversed this guy’s time, but he didn’t come back to life. What did you do to him?”

“This is your last warning,” Yogiri replied. “I’m not going to answer you. I don’t care if you’re messing with space or time or whatever; if you mess with us again, I’ll kill you.”

“Fine, fine. If you’re not going to play along, this is just boring. You can die now.” Childa immediately dropped to the ground. Whatever she had attempted, Yogiri’s power had automatically killed her first.

“We killed the guy who was watching us, so maybe they’ll stop coming for us now?” Tomochika said.

“It’s probably best to assume they’ll still try. It’ll be a pain.”

Himeln knew they were here, and they had no way of leaving the area quickly. If more of them came to this area, the three of them would be found immediately.

“We’ve had lots of interruptions, so let’s hurry,” Scott said.

“Yeah. Lead the way.”

With Scott in the lead, they began walking again. After walking for a while, they finally made it out of the barren field and back to where there was plant life. There was a paved road cutting through, so they followed that. A lot had happened recently so they had almost forgotten, but the grass here was infected by the Seyla and was therefore quite dangerous.

After walking for a short time, they came across the settlement Scott had mentioned. It was a small village, similar to the one Scott had lived in. Though it was getting late, they had managed to arrive before sunset. Yogiri was a little relieved, but Tomochika didn’t feel the same way.

“Nothing else is going to happen, right?” she asked as she looked around, still suspicious of everything.

“Considering what’s happened so far, it wouldn’t be strange if something

did."

"I just want a break. I'm so tired."

"I feel the same way. No one we've met listens to anything we say."

However, just as they were hoping nothing more would happen, the area around them went dark.

"Uhh...seriously?" Tomochika couldn't help but sigh, knowing nothing good would come of it.

Speak of the devil and he shall appear, I suppose, offered Mokomoko.

Yogiri looked up to see something enormous descending towards them.

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Chapter 18 — I Have Done It! I Have Reunited with Sir Takatou! I Have Won!

“Excuse me. Coming in. No, I don’t care if you mind. I’m here to collect some points. Thanks. See ya.”

Hiruko used the cylinder she had been given to extract points from the infected in the settlement she had found. From her perspective, they were denizens of a foreign world who made no effort to defend themselves or resist, so she didn’t feel guilty in the least for taking whatever these “points” were from them. She needed to reunite with Luu and therefore needed the energy provided by the infected to pass through the regional boundaries.

“Isn’t there a better way of doing this? Gathering points one by one is such a pain! Hey, Touichirou! Are you listening?!”

There was no reply. Members of the same faction could communicate telepathically, but it seemed like he was ignoring her. Maybe he had grown tired of answering all her questions.

“He seemed like a pretty lazy guy. He was probably just happy to get rid of me.”

Collecting points from a number of settlements, Hiruko had been making her way north. Himeln was in the northeastern corner of the continent, so that was her destination.

After walking for a while, she came across another area boundary. She stuck the filled cylinder into it, and the wall began to glow with a rainbow light, creating a gate. Hiruko stepped through.

“120 more to go, huh? Jeez, this is boring. Seriously.”

There was a limit to the number of units who could enter an area. Each unit had a cost determined by their size, and the limit for a single area was a total cost of one thousand. Hiruko was an L unit, so her cost was five hundred. The cost to move between areas matched that, so it took her five hundred points each time she wanted to cross a border. The infected were an unlimited source of energy, but it took some time for them to revive after

extracting a point. In short, collecting the five hundred points that were required to move between areas was a huge pain.

On top of that, while moving to an area under her own faction's control posed no problem, if the area was under an enemy's control, she could only enter if her own faction had control of two areas bordering it. So instead of just heading straight north, she needed to conquer territory as she went.

"It feels like someone tried to make a game here, but it's total crap. There's no way anyone would win this way."

The continent was huge, with countless regions. With a limit to how much force one could send into a single area, even if you took control of one place, the enemy could just recapture another one. If someone wanted to win the war, they'd need something in the rules to force the issue, but that didn't seem to exist, meaning the war would continue forever.

To make matters worse, there was no way to decrease the number of infected on the continent, so no matter how careful one was, the number of infected was always increasing. The only ending this continent seemed to be heading for was that of the Seyla consuming everything.

"Well, if they want to play this crappy game, they're more than welcome to. I couldn't care less about it. Where's the next settlement at?"

Hiruko searched the new area she had arrived in. It was under the control of the Slow Life League, so they had a base at the center. It would be populated only by M and S units. There wouldn't be any infected there, so Hiruko had no use for it. There were three other settlements, so she plotted a route to visit them all.

"How long is this gonna take?" Thoughts of the road ahead made her feel depressed, but if she didn't get on with it, it would only delay her reunion with Luu.

Pushing the negative thoughts down, she forced herself up into the air. But before she could start flying towards the next settlement, she noticed the space in front of her starting to warp.

"Huh? Someone coming in from the Slow Life League? I thought they could only teleport to the center."

In other words, this wasn't an ordinary occurrence. If teleporting around was so easy, the complicated rules governing the continent would all be pointless. Hiruko kept her guard up as she watched someone emerge from the distortion, but then she recognized her immediately.

“Ma!”

It was Luu, who was supposed to be in Himeln. She had come to find Hiruko first.

“Hiruko! Thank goodness!”

“Man, you’re a lifesaver. You look kinda big, though, don’t you?” The last time they had met, Luu had appeared to be about twelve years old, but she had since grown to the size of a twenty-year-old.

“One of my other bodies came and found me, so we fused.”

“Oh! So you’re finally back to normal? Nah, I didn’t think so.”

A god’s appearance didn’t mean much, but they still had self images that tended to dictate how they looked. Though she had returned to her original appearance, Hiruko felt like Luu’s presence was still quite a bit weaker than before.

“Yeah. Something important is clearly missing.”

“Figures. No way you’d be so weak if you were back to normal. Though you’re already a lot stronger than I am. All right, let’s go home for now.”

“Huh? I told you something important was missing.”

“That’s a problem, but if you stay here in your incomplete form, things could get annoying again. You should go back for now. Once you’re back to full strength, we can start sending our underlings in.”

“But I have to go see daddy.”

“Why’s that? Who cares about that guy anymore? We just stuck with him ’cause he was useful for finding parts of your body.”

“No, we have to. But if I go by myself, he might treat me coldly, so I want you to go with me.”

“Really? I mean, I guess we can if you want. But couldn’t you just drag him along with you whether he liked it or not?”

“I mean...then he would be angry with me.”

“So what? You could fix that easily. But that would bother you, right?”

“Yeah.”

With her current powers, manipulating the feelings of an ordinary human would be simple. But doing so would put an end to Yogiri’s free will. Once you had interfered with a person’s free will once, it would never return. That was one of the few things that gods couldn’t change, making pure, untouched souls incredibly valuable to them.

“Got it. We’ll go find them, then. You can take us there, right?”

“Yeah. I found you even though we were apart, after all.” Luu closed her eyes, searching for Yogiri. It should have been easy for her, but after a while, she opened her eyes with a look of surprise.

“What’s wrong?”

“They’re here. The one who split me apart.”

“What?! Actually, I still don’t know why you were split apart and turned into Philosopher’s Stones in the first place!”

“I don’t remember the details. I still don’t have the part of me that holds my memories. But I do feel angry thinking about them.”

“So what’re we gonna do? Should we go mess ’em up?”

“I wouldn’t stand a chance against them right now...so let’s go meet up with daddy first.” Luu took Hiruko’s hand as space started to warp around them. In her current state, she could move around without worrying about the boundaries.

◇ ◇ ◇

“Uhh...is that a squid? Haven’t we seen one of those before?!”

One attacked our cruise ship on the way to Ent.

“Why is it flying?!”

How should I know?

The creature flying in the sky was supposedly a giant squid, but with how fast it was spinning, Yogiri couldn’t really tell. Something like wings had been attached to its body so that it could gain lift by spinning.

The squid slowly lowered itself to the ground, landing in the settlement in front of them. Once it had come to a stop, Yogiri could finally recognize it for what it was. Ten tentacles sprouted from its long, thin body.

“I’m not sure what it’s doing here, but if it flew up from below, shouldn’t we be able to get out of here on it?”

“Oh! Maybe it’s Degul! The pirate!” Tomochika suggested.

Degul was the leader of the pirates who had been pretending to be a bouncer on the cruise ship they had taken. Putting aside the ethical issue of cooperating with pirates, a vehicle that could fly freely through the air would make getting around a lot easier. And though they weren’t too familiar with Degul, negotiating would be easier with her than if it was a total stranger at the helm.

We still have no evidence it is the same squid we encountered earlier, or that the same people are using it, Mokomoko reminded them.

While that was true, they would just have to find out for themselves. Yogiri approached the beast. As he got closer, it spat something out of its mouth. It was Hanakawa.

Yogiri sighed. "What are you doing here?"

"I would love to know the very same thing!" Hanakawa immediately snapped.

"Weren't you supposed to be at that academy place?" Tomochika asked.

"Precisely! I was subjected to a horrendous life-or-death training regimen! Someone appeared to rescue me, but then we were immediately assaulted by this thing! It grabbed me and threw me in its mouth! I thought I was going to die for sure, but for some reason I am still alive!"

"I see. Good for you."

"Please! Please act a little happier to see me alive! We might have never seen each other again! I am one of your very few surviving classmates!"

"Why aren't you excited, then?"

"Hooray! I have done it! I have reunited with Sir Takatou! I have won! There, is that good enough?"

"Hooray."

"Please! Surely you can put a little more emotion into it!"

"Actually, I am happy to see you're okay, though I can't say your death would be too much of a bother."

"Why not just leave out that last part?!"

"You two really get along, don't you?" Tomochika interjected.

"I would much prefer to get along with you than this unsociable child, Tomochika!" Hanakawa cried.

"Uhh, no thanks."

"Your bluntness wounds me!"

"So, you don't know what's up with this squid either?" Yogiri asked.

"Not a clue."

"I see. Hey, guys inside! Is Degul there? Can we talk?" Yogiri called out.

Shortly after, one of the tentacles dropped down in front of him, splitting open to reveal a staircase. A woman in men's clothes walked down it. It was Degul.

"What are you guys doing here?" Degul asked.

“We ended up here by accident.”

“Up in the sky?”

“You can get here from the surface. I think it’s stranger for you to get here by squid, personally.”

“So, what do you want?” Degul replied. “We don’t know much about this place. If you want to tell me about it, I’d be more than happy to listen.”

“Can we come on board? There are a ton of these islands floating in the sky with teleportation devices set up between them, but we can’t use them very well. It would be a lot easier if we could fly around.”

“That might be difficult. I don’t mind letting you on board, but flying takes a lot of energy. Our plan was to go back to the surface after gathering some information.”

“Energy, huh? Is that why Hanakawa was in its mouth?”

“Oh, that guy? I did just leave him in the mouth, didn’t I? This thing is somewhere between an animal and a machine. It collects energy by eating other living things.”

“How much would you get from eating Hanakawa?”

“A single person doesn’t amount to much. Then again, he’s kind of fat, so he’d probably create more energy than most.”

“Umm...could I perhaps request you do not speak of my life and death so flippantly?”

“Why not use me?” Scott interjected. “I’m immortal, and I’ve grown quite used to having energy extracted from me.”

“Is that really the issue here?! I’d feel super gross traveling around on a squid that eats people for fuel!” Tomochika cried.

“But if you don’t reach your objective, you’ll never get around to killing me properly, right?” Scott answered. “So there is no need to be concerned about my well-being. You can kill me as many times as you like.”

“Well, if that’s how he feels...” Degul murmured.

“I’m still not sure.” Tomochika had her reservations, but at this rate they wouldn’t be able to go anywhere. They needed some way to travel.

“If he doesn’t mind, why don’t we give it a try? I don’t know how his supposed immortality works anyway.”

“You’re really going to try—huh?”

Once again, the area went dark around them as something blocked out the sun.

“Again?!”
Plenty of guests today, aren’t there? said Mokomoko.
It was too large to tell what it was, but it was clearly falling towards them.

Chapter 19 — Are You Saying the Philosopher's Stones Just Collected Themselves, and Now We're Going to Be Able to Go Home?!

After crushing the Slow Life League and Kingdom of Momurus, the UEG headed to Suudoria Academy. She didn't know what kind of place it was, but she could use her power to learn what she needed. Most of those who lived there were treated as students whose education consisted of training for battle. Once they reached high school, they began to see real combat. It seemed a little different than the system of the other factions, but to the UEG, they were nothing more than a target for extermination.

Strolling through the grounds of the academy, she executed any student she came across. The girl who had been seeking someone to defeat her had been a little interesting, but she hadn't offered much resistance and certainly wasn't the strongest student there. There were a few who were more powerful than her, but compared to the UEG, the difference in their strength seemed minuscule.

After killing everyone she encountered, she discovered there were more students elsewhere. For whatever reason, teleportation magic and illusions had been woven together to turn a group of floating islands into a single continent. More students appeared to populate those other islands.

"Hunting each of them down one by one seems like too much trouble. Perhaps I will leave them to my subordinates."

She had already come across a number of enemies who would be a fair match even for her envoys, so she would need to check things out on her own first.

"*Zakuro*," the UEG called to one of her subordinates. He had been ordered to wander around and kill anyone he encountered.

"*Yes, ma'am*?"

"*How are things progressing on your end?*"

"*I have finished wiping out all major cities. All that remains is smaller-scale settlements. We've been ignoring animals for now, but what do you think we should do?*"

"*Any creature incapable of understanding our reasoning can be spared. In the end, the entire world will be destroyed, so they will be dealt with in time. Anyway. Come to me. There are not so many powerful beings remaining on the surface, so you may leave the others for now.*"

"*Understood. But where are you, Overlord? I cannot find you.*"

"*Hmm. That is right, I am behind some sort of barrier*."

The UEG had no problem seeing or moving through the barriers protecting the floating islands, but for a god of Zakuro's level, they would be impenetrable. They had even slowed her own search down a little.

"Searching through each one individually would be a pain. I suppose I will destroy them," she said to herself.

The UEG lifted a hand above her head. Countless rays of light fired from it, flying off in all directions and destroying the barriers on each of the floating islands. The barriers tying the islands together were destroyed all at once.

"*There! I feel much better now!*"

"*I can detect your presence again. You are in the sky?*"

"*I do not understand the reason, but a number of floating islands were stitched together into some sort of false continent.*"

"What the heck? That doesn't make any sense."

"*I am sure it was just some individual's game. There are a number of powerful beings still here. I wish to leave them to you. I have decided to finish off the last of those who might offer resistance.*" Now that she had made contact with him, she could leave the rest to Zakuro.

The UEG searched again. She noticed there was someone below her with significant power. There had been a barrier there, but she had unintentionally destroyed it along with the others.

"Well, well. It appears this individual has some connection to me. How interesting."

The UEG lifted up into the air, kicking down and punching through the ground. Smashing through the stone road, she kicked her way through a number of floors, making it through a few layers of buildings into an

underground cave. There seemed to be something above it that predated even the academy.

"It is around here, is it not?"

"What is this place? I didn't know there was something like this underground." Jumping through the hole the UEG had made was a person with a wolf's head. He was wearing a uniform, so he seemed to be another student. The non-human residents of the academy must have lived underground. "Are you the one who was going on earlier about wiping out all life?"

"That is correct. Fear not; I am more than happy to ignore the small fry as I kill those of power first. The act must be done in its proper order."

"What? Kill me? Do you realize I'm a third-year? Do you even know I have a skill that prevents me from dying?"

"Of course not." The UEG fired a beam of light that punched through the wolfman's chest.

"So what? I'll heal from that in—"

"No, you will not. It appears you bear the blessing of some god, but nullifying it was no issue for me." His power didn't seem to come from Battlesong, so he had absolute confidence in it, but that made no difference to the UEG.

The wolfman dropped to the ground, motionless. With his immortality removed, losing his heart was all it took to kill him.

"Well, well. I don't know what god you are, but don't you think this is too much?" a boy with one eye called out from in front of her as she moved to proceed into the cavern.

"I have made my declaration. All that is left is to see how you respond."

"I see. Then I guess we have to fight, but a battle between gods won't be settled that quickly. It'll be a huge pain, so why don't we just agree not to mess with each other?"

"I care not how you feel about it. If you do not wish to fight, then you may die," the UEG said bluntly.

Her interest was in what lay in the depths of this cavern, so she couldn't care less about the students who were continually appearing to harass her. She continued off into the cave, punching the boy in front of her as she walked past him. He was sent flying and dropped into a heap on the ground.

"You were once a human, were you not? Your like have obvious

weaknesses, so you are no match for me." Not in the mood to play around, she decided to clean things up immediately.

"I-Impossible. How..." Being unable to dodge or block was unbelievable to him, and the pain was equally absurd.

"The fact that you were once human is your weakness. Taking your powers away from you when you were still weak was simple. I have no such weakness. From the moment of my birth, I was a god."

Walking leisurely past, she crushed the boy underfoot. It seemed he had been quite strong, but she was tired of this. The only one who had been fun to play with on these islands was Touichirou.

As she made it into the depths of the cavern, her surroundings began to change. The stone walls were replaced by writhing flesh.

"Hmm. So this is what they call the Seyla? Did they not realize it was just below them?"

The UEG continued through the fleshy cavern. The walls had been infected by the Seyla, but she had no problem touching them. The Seyla came from her, after all.

The cavern around her was like a building made of flesh. It had hallways and rooms inside it. There were things like sofas and tables made of flesh inside as well, but she didn't know what they were for. Following the presence she had found, she made it to the center of the structure. A person was embedded in one of the walls. Fused into the wall itself, she had become the heart of this structure of flesh.

"So, you are the original. Can you speak?"

There was no reply. The individual didn't appear to have any cognitive ability left. The UEG decided to probe the person's mind herself. In the UEG's world, reading someone's mind like that was a taboo, but she had no other choice if she wanted to learn anything from them.

This was a person who had taken in part of the UEG. She had used something the UEG had created to create her own followers in this world. Once her mind had been broken, the Sages who ruled this world had made use of her. Pieces of her body were scattered across the floating islands. It seemed she was being used as an energy source for this false continent.

"I cannot fathom their purpose...but I cannot forgive them for using my followers as a tool like this. Once this academy has been laid low, I will put an end to these Sages." The UEG touched the Seyla, absorbing it into herself.

Even if only connected to her in a minor way, it was unpleasant to see the Seyla used like this. As something born from the UEG, absorbing it back into herself was easy. After she had absorbed the entire structure of flesh, all that was left behind was the rocky cavern.

"I can leave the rest of the small fry to Zakuro. There should only be a few beings remaining who require my direct attention. Hmm...I suppose they are in the nation known as Himeln."

A quick search revealed the locations of those she was looking for. For some reason, the capital of Himeln had been destroyed, but their powerful queen was somewhere else. Though she didn't know the situation, the UEG decided to find the queen first.

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An enormous object fell from the sky as Yogiri's group watched in shock. Its landing was hard enough to shake the ground around them. Unable to stand, Yogiri hurriedly grabbed on to Tomochika.

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Honestly, you look rather pathetic.

"I wouldn't mind falling that much, but I figured this was a good chance to grab her without it seeming unnatural."

"I don't really care, but could you at least not say it out loud?" Tomochika replied. Neither she nor Degul had been fazed in the slightest. Their footing was stable enough that a little shaking wouldn't bother them.

Scott and Hanakawa, on the other hand, were thrown to the ground.

"What is that thing?" Yogiri asked. "It's so big, I can't tell." A large white mass had landed in front of them.

"I feel repulsed just looking at it!" Hanakawa added.

"It's not one of those 'George's' again, is it?!" Tomochika asked, thinking back on the army of cockroaches they had once faced.

"Looks closer to a maggot to me." Yogiri couldn't see the long, plump, white body as anything else.

"Maggots are still super gross!"

At first glance, it did appear to be an enormous maggot with large, transparent wings. Countless human legs sprouted from the bottom of its rotund body.

Hmm. Rather than a maggot, do you not think it more closely resembles a termite queen? Look, do you not see the head, up at the front?

There was a comparatively tiny head and partial torso attached to the front of the enormous body. It appeared to be that of a woman. Though it was only her upper half, she seemed to be growing out of the maggot's body.

"This is getting even more disgusting!" Tomochika yelled.

"Isn't it kind of mean to call her gross?" Yogiri commented.

"I-I guess so. Sorry—wait, why am I apologizing?!"

The maggot-like body began to squirm. The unsettling movement was accompanied by countless holes opening up in its sides, which began to spit out clumps of flesh, each dropping to the ground with a wet plop.

"What the heck?! What is that?!"

Tomochika was starting to lose it. Yogiri couldn't say he felt great about what he was seeing either. He felt instinctively repulsed by the sight in front of him.

"This is bad. That thing is an L unit. I never knew they could do this sort of thing."

"Scott, don't just leave us in the dark here!"

“Right. I told you there is a maximum of two L units for any one area, right? But technically, that is only a limit placed on *movement* between areas. In short, if you can create L units already inside the boundary, you can have as many as you want.”

“I...see?” Tomochika responded. “L units are like that prince, right? I never really found out how strong he was.”

“We’d have been in trouble if we’d given him room to show how strong he was, so don’t you think it was better to kill him before that happened?” said Yogiri.

“I guess so. More importantly, can you let go of me already?”

Yogiri had continued to hold on to Tomochika the whole time, but once she said that, he had no choice but to let go.

“Well...I’m sure it will be no problem with Takatou’s power,” Scott said. As he was speaking, the woman at the head of the giant white mass turned to face them.

“Greetings. I am the queen of Himeln, Elisabelle. Sending my forces in to die one at a time seemed foolish, so I have come to bring our full strength to bear at once.” It seemed the kingdom of Himeln had turned its full attention on them.

I suppose this brings the cycle of revenge to an end. The entire royal family intends to kill you, young man, Mokomoko remarked.

Even knowing it was useless, Yogiri tried to talk her down. “Come on, let’s stop this. We’ve only been fighting back to defend ourselves. This isn’t something that deserves the head of state coming to deal with things in person.”

“No, no, this is precisely that kind of situation. Those of us who prize military power so greatly cannot allow our forces to be struck down without reprisal. Even if that revenge puts an end to us both, it must be done,” Elisabelle said slowly. As expected, trying to convince her had been pointless.

Well...I suppose it is common practice to kill those who look down on you for a martial house.

“Really? Is our family like that? Even now? I’m pretty sure there are a lot of people looking down on my sister!” Tomochika replied.

She is...not the true successor, so she does not count. You may look down on her as you like!

“How does that work?!”

The newly birthed lumps of flesh began to transform. Tiny compared to the mother that had birthed them, they began to line up.

“Daddy!”

Yogiri turned around at the sudden shout from behind them. Hiruko and a girl he didn’t recognize were standing there.

“Oh, it’s Hiruko!” Tomochika exclaimed. “I guess you two can get around even with those weird barriers!”

“That was only thanks to Ma. Now that she’s powered up, she can ignore those barriers like they’re nothing.”

“Is that Luu?” said Tomochika. “If you’ve grown that much, does that mean you found more Philosopher’s Stones?”

Yogiri hadn’t recognized her, but Tomochika realized the young woman was Luu.

“Yeah. Some Philosopher’s Stones had fused together into another version of me, and they came and found me. Once I fused with her, I became like this.”

“So, is that all the Philosopher’s Stones, then?”

“I think there are only one or two left. I still don’t have the parts that hold my memory or my soul.”

“Do you think you can get us back to our own world now?”

“Depending on the distance, probably. Even if we can’t move all at once, we should be able to get there by stopping off at different worlds along the way,” Luu answered casually. It didn’t sound like it was going to be very difficult.

“Huh? We barely did anything on this continent. Are you saying the Philosopher’s Stones just collected themselves and now we’re going to be able to go home?!” Tomochika’s surprise was exaggerated, but it was a surprising turn of events. Most of their problems had just been solved.

After all the time we spent wandering around here... Mokomoko didn’t seem particularly happy about it either.

Chapter 20 — That Sounds Like You Are Just Being Lazy, but I Get What You're Trying to Say

The squid descended from the sky, bringing Hanakawa and Degul. Next, the queen of Himeln appeared, followed shortly after by Hiruko and Luu.

"What is going on here?" Yogiri muttered.

"So many things happening all at once," Tomochika agreed.

"I guess we have to start by dealing with that queen."

"Hey! I'm glad you're happy about reuniting, but isn't this situation kind of dangerous?" Hiruko said as she pointed at the queen, starting to get a bit panicked.

Though the rest of them had been distracted by Luu's arrival, the queen had continued making her preparations. She was creating more and more pawns for herself. The allies she was making came in all shapes and sizes. They weren't all the same either. Some of them were born with basically no powers at all, while others were mind-bogglingly powerful.

"Can't you do something about her, Hiruko?" Yogiri asked.

"She's a bit much for me. Ma could probably handle it, though."

"Okay, Luu, then. Can you deal with her somehow?" Yogiri asked. Hiruko claimed Luu was the stronger of the two, but Yogiri didn't have any idea how strong she was. From his perspective, Luu gave off a more graceful image, one that didn't evoke thoughts of strength as much as Hiruko's energetic assertiveness.

"Probably, but are you not going to do anything?" Luu replied.

"I don't really want to get involved."

"That sounds like you are just being lazy, but I get what you're trying to say."

Yogiri's power could stop any opponent. It afforded no pride or dignity to the enemy. If there were other ways to resolve the situation, he preferred to

try those first.

"Okay, I'll deal with her, then." Luu stepped out in front of Yogiri.

What would she do? How would she defeat the queen? Yogiri was rather curious to see, so he watched carefully, but in the end she never did anything.

"I am the UEG, the god who will wipe out all life in this world! To make things short, you are all guilty of a grave sin, so repent with your deaths!"

A girl appeared with that declaration before Luu could make her move.

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The UEG flew over to the island where the queen of Himeln waited. Looking down from the sky, she immediately saw an enormous insect on top of the otherwise featureless island. It took her a moment to realize that was the queen. She had learned through her information gathering efforts that the queen of Himeln was an ordinary human. But there was no one else who gave the impression of a queen. Though her form was different than expected, that insect must have been the queen Elisabelle.

"Hmm. She must be quite determined to accomplish something if she is willing to adopt such an unsightly form."

Elisabelle's ability was to produce powerful children. However, even she was not able to choose what powers they would be born with. It was effectively up to luck, so there was only one way to guarantee favorable results: increase the number of trials. In order to produce a large number of children, she had taken on an enormous form and gathered a tremendous amount of energy.

Elisabelle's ability placed a heavy emphasis on random chance. There was no way to control what kind of person would be born, but in exchange, it was capable of creating beings that could go toe to toe with gods.

"So, what opponent has forced her to go to such extremes?"

Following Elisabelle's gaze, the UEG found a familiar god. Though she was a god herself, the UEG's memory of the time she was imprisoned was vague at best. She did remember that a number of gods had worked together to seal her away and that this other goddess was one of them. A god on the same level as the UEG herself. One of her enemies. One who was responsible for the UEG's own defeat. In short, she was a top priority for revenge.

"I thought she perished long ago. I am surprised to see her here. No, she is

not in perfect condition, is she?" At this point, the UEG couldn't care less about Elisabelle. Her goal of wiping out all life in this world was little more than her throwing a tantrum. Taking revenge on the goddess came long before that.

"I suppose I should finish what I have started, though. I will not be able to relax if I keep changing my plans on the fly."

In a loud voice, the UEG declared her intent to wipe out all life in the world. She had already decided that this declaration needed to be made before killing anyone, and she wasn't about to change that now. Lifting both hands, she unleashed countless bullets of light.

The light rained down on the floating island, the brilliant downpour destroying everything indiscriminately. Whenever the light struck a target, it exploded with a burst of extreme heat, vaporizing everything in the area. The overwhelming assault covered the entire island, too large to dodge and too powerful to defend against.

Elisabelle, her repulsive offspring, the ancient squid, and even the earth that made up the floating island were annihilated. When the rain of light finally abated, the island itself was gone. All that remained was a tiny sphere of light, incomparable in size to that of the attack she had just unleashed. It was a defensive barrier. The goddess had deployed it to protect those around her.

"I imagined she would be able to manage something, but I never expected her to protect the humans around her."

The UEG was capable of destroying universes with ease. Her attack had been more of a probing strike, but the fact that there were survivors beyond the woman herself took the UEG by surprise.

Dropping to the same height as the goddess, the UEG approached.

"Hah! It has been quite a while, has it not? Uhh...hmm...what was your name, again?" Her memories of the time before her imprisonment were still vague. Though she roughly remembered that this goddess was involved, she didn't really know who the woman was or where she was from.

"That's what I'd like to ask. You said you were the UEG? I remember you having a different name...but I can't recall it, so maybe I'm wrong."

"Nevertheless! There is no mistaking that you were involved in my imprisonment! I think."

"I don't really know. I can't remember things very well. The most I

remember is that I feel like we've met before."

"Is that not strange?! How is such a grand event not a vivid memory for you?!"

"Well...the part of me that holds my memories is missing, so I only have a vague recollection of the past. Do you have any proof that I was involved?"

"Proof? Err...I suppose not. I only had the vague impression that you were responsible."

"For such a 'grand event,' you don't seem to remember all that well either."

"No, I am quite sure you were involved." The UEG felt this was true, but she had no memory of what had actually happened or how this goddess was related.

Though she had both the arrogance and power to bulldoze her way through any situation, the UEG would never lie to herself. In short, without solid evidence, she couldn't bring herself to take revenge on the goddess. As a being who transcended time and space, one might imagine she could simply check for herself, but that was also impossible. With her memories of that fragment of space-time so vague, its existence was too uncertain for her to interact with.

"What is with this stupid conversation?!" Unable to bear the vague, plodding conversation, a girl behind the goddess spoke up, drawing the UEG's attention to the rest of the group.

The goddess had protected five others: the small girl who had complained, a boy the UEG found rather fetching, a somewhat more plump boy, a woman in men's clothes, and another goddess who seemed to be a child of the first.

"Well, without evidence, I cannot say I am entitled to revenge against you. However, I have already declared my intention to wipe out all life in this world, so the fact that I must kill you does not change! What is your name?"

"I'm Luu. Daddy gave me that name."

"'Daddy'? You mean that plump boy?"

"Is that supposed to be a joke?"

"Yes, of course. You mean that young man over there, no? He seems the type to be attractive to gods."

"Huh? Am I mistaken or have I just been thoroughly insulted?" the rounder boy asked, but he was already beneath the UEG's notice.

"Now then, let us conclude this discussion. I may have no memories, but

you are not a being I can take lightly...I think. I do not know why, but I cannot stand you! We must be fated to do battle upon our reunion!"

"That's no good. I'm not in perfect shape, so if we fight, I'll probably lose. But do you mind if I take daddy somewhere safe first?"

Despite her claim, Luu didn't seem weak enough to be defeated in an instant without offering any resistance. That was a fact. The UEG wouldn't be able to defeat her that easily.

"Hmm. If I allow you to take them somewhere else, finding them to execute later will become a waste of time. Instead, why not use them to draw forth your serious side?"

The UEG turned to the people Luu was protecting. They were in the way. If Luu had to fight while protecting them, she couldn't go all out, but the UEG wasn't so soft as to give Luu time to evacuate them. So she decided to kill them immediately. If Luu was serious in calling this human boy her father, she would be forced to pursue the UEG to avenge him. Though she still had confidence in her own supremacy, the UEG thought that having Luu fight for real would make it a proper battle.

Luu floated in the air, using a sphere of light to protect herself and her companions. It was a barrier that rejected all influence from the outside, only allowing that which Luu permitted to pass through it. It could defend against an attack of any caliber, but to the UEG it was little different than a thin sheet of paper. Though it encapsulated the concept of ultimate defense, the UEG could unleash an attack with the concept of ignoring any defense. That would bring them close to the paradox of the unstoppable force and immovable object, but there was no need to ponder the particulars. The more powerful god would prevail.

In the end, the heart of a battle between gods was just a numbers game. No matter the process, in the end, the one with greater power would win. There was no room for clever strategizing.

The UEG waved a hand, tearing the barrier Luu had created to pieces.

"Now then, let us avoid being circuitous about this. I will begin by taking the life of your beloved 'daddy'!"

And then, the world went dark.

Chapter 21 — Basically, I'm Just Saying Things to Make You Think

"What is this?"

Unable to grasp the situation she was in, the UEG was in shock for quite a while. Or so it felt for her, but likely not much time had passed at all. Empty blackness stretched out in every direction. She was in a void. Luu and those under her protection were nowhere to be seen. The only things here were the UEG herself and a single boy.

"Let me start by saying I might sound like a know-it-all, but I don't really understand anything either. Basically, I'm just saying things to make you think, so you can feel free to treat it all as nonsense if you like."

"And just who are you?"

"Call me Kouryu. I'm the god in charge of this world. I just finally managed to take control back recently. I'm a bit relieved. It feels pretty good to have things work out just the way I planned."

"You are a god? I felt nothing of such a being before."

"Oh, I'm glad to hear that. Once I realized you had been resurrected, I was desperately trying to hide myself, though even if you had found me, I might have been too weak for you to care."

As he said, this Kouryu didn't seem particularly strong. The members of the Slow Life League were much more powerful than he was. Still, he seemed quite skilled in hiding his abilities, so there was no way of telling how strong he actually was except by fighting him.

"What are you doing here?"

"Huh. That's a pretty strange response for someone as prideful as you. Are you still confused about what's going on?"

Of course she was confused, so much so that it surprised even her. Everything always went more or less how she planned, so encountering an unexpected situation should have been impossible.

"I am asking what this place is!"

“That’s a good question. Maybe it’s like the gap between life and death, a space-time singularity, a flashback, or a dream? Like the last glimmer of life before you die? Or a single instant where everything comes apart when one’s fate has been decided? You’re not dead yet, but your death has been guaranteed. This place could be like a shadow born from the transition from life to death. Anyway, interpret it as you like.”

“Not that I believe you, but why are you here, then?”

“I’ve been waiting for a chance to say ‘serves you right.’ Takatou would never say that to you, so I wanted to get it off my chest. Of course, I can’t go somewhere weird like this myself, so I just projected a shadow of myself here for this brief instant.”

“I see. It is true; despite my great wisdom, this is a phenomenon I am unfamiliar with. But you claim I have died? I do not know what this place is, but I can simply teleport away as I wish.”

The UEG searched her surroundings. The empty blackness really seemed to go on forever. As far as her senses could reach, the darkness continued on, unending. So she tried looking into other dimensions, parallel worlds, or alternate universes, but none of it worked. Only the same void greeted her.

There really was nothing here. Finally realizing it, she started to feel the beginnings of fear. No matter where she went, there was nothing. Beyond that, she couldn’t teleport.

“I-In that case, I will incinerate everything! Time! Space! The universe itself! The higher-level universe that encompasses this one!”

The UEG unleashed her power in full force. But that power, which should have annihilated everything, vanished into the darkness. It hadn’t made the slightest change in her surroundings.

“It’s impossible,” Kouryu said. “There’s nothing here, so there’s nothing for you to destroy.”

“Like hell there isn’t! You think such a concept is even possible?!”

“To put it in simpler terms, this is something more like a dream that only you are seeing. No matter what you do in the dream, you can’t destroy the dream itself, can you?”

“A dream?”

“Right. A dream on the verge of death, from which you will never awaken.”

“Hah! You think I can die? Do not be absurd. I am indestructible. Even if

I can be sealed away, I cannot be destroyed!”

“To be accurate, you’re not dead yet. It’s just that your death has been guaranteed. You decided to kill Takatou, so now you are going to die.”

“Who is this Takatou? And why does he matter?”

“What was that goddess’s name? Luu? Yogiri Takatou was the good-looking guy standing with her. He’s a special being. No matter what the situation, if he decides to kill something, it dies. To put it bluntly, it’s like an instant death cheat.”

“I have been subjected to this phenomenon, so I must admit that this Takatou has some sort of ability. But I have yet to do anything to him!”

“But you decided to kill him, right?”

“It was still only a thought! I had not done anything to him! Fine! In that case, I will refrain from taking his life! Is that what you want?!”

Though it was frustrating, she had no other choice. If she couldn’t escape this place on her own, she couldn’t act all high and mighty. If she was trapped here forever, there was no point in being alive.

“Yeah, if you were just an ordinary human, changing your mind would be the end of it. But you’re a god. You can’t do something that will cause your identity to collapse. Your belief in your ability to do anything is just that strong.”

“I... I do not understand... What is this Takatou?” She had never heard of such a being. She couldn’t even imagine something like that existing.

“There are all kinds of gods. They can be divided into two types: those who know about it and those who don’t. Those who don’t know tend to be reckless and arrogant, believing they can do anything, and so they become remarkably powerful. In contrast, those who know are comparatively calmer and try not to do anything crazy. Or rather, they can’t. They know their limits.”

“What do you mean, ‘it’?! Cease with this condescension!”

“Well, I don’t really know either; that’s why I’m calling it by such a vague name. I don’t know what it is, and I don’t want to either. But gods like me are a lot more moderate. We realize there’s a being more powerful than we could ever imagine. Just like humans punish wrongdoing because they believe God is watching them, we believe there’s something out there watching us gods.”

The UEG couldn’t accept the words he was saying. They were

incomprehensible to someone like her, who believed herself to be the most powerful being in existence.

"Some of us believe in a theory like this: There are universes contained inside larger universes and so on. Why has that total collection of universes survived? If space and time are infinite, then there is a possibility that eventually an ultimate being would emerge, one that could wipe out all universes on a whim. If the possibility isn't zero, then given infinite time, it is guaranteed to happen. But it hasn't. From what we've been able to observe, once gods reach a certain threshold of power, they disappear. So there must be someone out there erasing them, right? There must be some sort of limit or criteria being applied."

"Criteria?"

The UEG had never considered that. She had believed gods were indestructible, eternal beings. She had killed any number of gods, but death was just another state of being for them, one from which they would eventually recover.

"Yeah, some people call that the Scale, others call it the Limiter. Either way, it seems something like that is out there."

"That is beyond absurd! The mere thought of trying to kill that causes one to die?! Do not be ridiculous!"

"The people who got wrapped up in your little rampage probably felt the same way, don't you think? Someone showed up and decided to kill them for basically no reason, and they had no way to resist. You can blather on about their fate all you want, but is it that strange the same fate would eventually come for you?"

"But why would such a being take human form? Why would it be wandering around in a place like this? Even if it existed, when and where did it come from?"

"Who knows? I certainly don't." Kouryu laughed at her.

"What?"

"Like I said at the beginning, everything I've been saying is nonsense. There might not be even a single shred of truth to any of it."

"You dare to mock me?!"

"Yes, exactly. I came here because I wanted to make fun of you before you died. And it looks like I'm going to disappear soon too."

Those words sent a shiver down her spine. He was about to leave her

alone in this eternally empty space. She was finally starting to realize what that meant.

"W-Wait! Do not leave! Do you intend to abandon me here alone?!"

"I'm not leaving you anywhere. The person you see in front of you is just a shadow anyway, melting into the darkness. Even this conversation was something I had planned out beforehand. It's just picking what looks like the appropriate response from among the answers I prepared beforehand, trying to guess what you would ask about."

"A-An illusion is fine! Just do not leave me! Stay here!"

"Man, seeing you panic like that is really cathartic. It's a shame the real me will never know." Despite her desperate pleading, the shadow of the boy named Kouryu vanished into the darkness.

"I-In that case, I will simply create a world here myself." There was nothing here, and she couldn't go anywhere, so she would have to make something here herself. As a god, she could create as much as she wished.

Or she should have been able to. But no matter what she made, it immediately vanished into the darkness. This space didn't permit anything to exist. And it finally occurred to her that she too was disappearing. No matter what she did to try and preserve herself, her own perception of herself was starting to grow vague.

"Why? Why has this happened to me?"

Losing her form, losing her sense of self, the UEG finally vanished into the empty blackness.

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"That barrier did not help much, did it?" Hanakawa commented.

The UEG had waved a hand and the barrier Luu had created had shattered. Then, as Yogiri had realized his life was in danger, the UEG had fallen from the sky. Though he had no idea who she was or what she was here for, this was a common enough occurrence that he could only shake his head with a sigh.

Chapter 22 — Interlude: You're Not That Serious about This, Are You, Gramps? Fine, I'll Do Better This Time

After fleeing Suudoria Academy, Van made his way to the island at the center of the continent. It was a place full of idyllic, natural beauty. No forces from the four factions of Belm were permitted entry. Of course, that included Van, as he was a student of Suudoria Academy, but he was the one who had made that rule in the first place, so ignoring it was no problem for him. As the Game Master, Van could ignore the rules as he saw fit.

"Well, this is an issue. The whole academy is toast."

An enormous squid had attacked, the Demon Lord had shown her true form, and then a god calling herself the UEG had appeared. All the fighting had reduced the academy to a pile of rubble. After defeating the Demon Lord, the UEG had wiped out the academy's remaining students. She had even absorbed the Seyla that Van had hidden under the school.

Using his powers as the administrator of the region, he checked in on the other factions. They were all in shambles, having effectively been annihilated as well. According to the records, the UEG had wiped out the Slow Life League and Momurus, while the horrifying state of Himeln was a result of the queen's own actions. At this point, all units of any notable strength had been killed. All that was left were stragglers with no real strength.

"I get the feeling there's no coming back from this. I doubt Gramps would find it interesting either."

Van had set up the war between the four factions of Belm in order to entertain his grandfather, the Great Sage Mitsuki. Truthfully, the balance of the game hadn't been very good, so things had turned out rather boring in the end, but he doubted his grandfather would find having an enormous monster come in from outside and wipe everything out to be an acceptable way of ending things. He doubted Mitsuki would be that upset over it, but he still felt

guilty. If things were going to end like this, he would have been better off setting up the rules to encourage a quicker conclusion.

"Well...I guess I'll just have to apologize."

Passing through the small settlement, he headed to Mitsuki's mansion at the top of a nearby hill. As he stepped inside, the women working all turned and bowed as one.

"Yo. Is Gramps around?"

"Lord Mitsuki is within the inner garden," one of the women answered, her polite tone failing to hide her disdain. Normally, Van's good looks earned him interest from the women in his life, but the women here couldn't care less about him. They had to treat him politely as Mitsuki's grandson, but otherwise they had no interest in him at all.

Passing through the building, Van made his way to the inner garden, where he immediately found his grandfather lying on the grass.

"Hi, Gramps."

"Oh, Van! Long time no see! How are you doing?!" The answer came back from a boy who looked even younger than Van himself. This youth with unbelievably good looks was Van's grandfather and the one in charge of all the Sages.

"What's wrong?"

"It would be faster for you to see for yourself."

"Oh, you mean the game? Sorry, things have been moving so slow, I haven't been paying much attention."

"Yeah, I realized I made a mistake with that. Next time I'll try to make things move a bit faster."

Lifting himself up off the ground, Mitsuki displayed information on the game in the space in front of him. Stats for the four factions were written at the center of the map of the continent.

"They were wiped out? Oh...that girl woke up. So that means Malnarilna is dead? Things have gotten really messy, huh?" Though he sounded concerned, Mitsuki's face was all smiles. He always enjoyed unexpected developments. The fact that he wasn't angry made Van sigh with relief.

"You know her?"

"We dated for a bit a long time ago. That's a secret, though. I don't want everyone else getting jealous. Man, I figured things would be messy when she woke up, but this is terrible." The information on the display in front of

them changed, showing the state of the entire world rather than just Belm. “Half the population is dead. I never expected she’d do something like this. I figured a lot of people would get killed when she tried to take revenge on me or the goddesses, but I didn’t expect a massacre like this...”

“Even if it’s only half the population, all the major cities have been destroyed, so the world is basically over, right?” Van said.

“And that beam of light she fired went right through the core of the planet, so the whole thing will probably fall apart soon.”

“So gathering the survivors together and trying to rebuild civilization is no good, then?”

“No, recovering from this is probably impossible. We’ll have to reset. Hmm. I don’t want to go too far back. How about here?”

Van had no idea what Mitsuki had done, but since he flopped back down on the grass, he must have already been finished.

“Huh? You’re just resetting it without warning?”

“No time like the present, right? I’ll leave the rest to you.”

“You’re not that serious about this, are you, gramps? Fine, I’ll do better this time.”

After saying that, Van lay down on the grass beside his grandfather and closed his eyes.

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“Huh?” Tomochika blurted out as the scenery around her suddenly started changing.

Similar confused voices came from all around her. It took a moment for her brain to adjust. It was so sudden and unexpected, she couldn’t understand what had happened. Just a moment ago, she had been floating in the air with Luu and Yogiri, staring down at some girl who called herself the UEG. But now, she was sitting in the middle of a bus, surrounded by her classmates, all of them starting to panic.

“Huh? Wha? Huh? What’s going on here?” Looking out the window, she saw an expansive grassland. Up in the sky were floating islands. Looking at the seat beside her, she saw that Mokomoko had crammed herself in.

“Huh? Mokomoko?! Wait, isn’t Mikochi supposed to be sitting here? Wait...did time get reversed or something?!”

Your assessment of the situation is far too accurate! Should you not be acting far more flustered?!

"I'm pretty confused, but I'm used to weird things like this happening by now. Still, if time got reversed and Mikochi isn't here..."

The seat beside Tomochika belonged to Romiko Jougasaki. If time had been reversed, it was strange that Romiko wasn't there. Tomochika stood up and looked at the back of the bus. Yogiri was sitting there, sleeping with a dumb look on his face. She couldn't help but feel relieved at seeing him.

I have taken the liberty of looking around, and a number of the seats appear to be vacant, beyond the ones which were empty from the start.

"What do you think happened?"

Time has been reversed, yet the situation is not quite the same. At this point in time, you should not be able to see me yet.

"Hmm. For now, let's assume that's what happened. Now the bus has stopped, so next is..."

The door of the bus opened, and a woman in a white dress stepped inside. It was just like Tomochika remembered.

"It has been quite a while, everyone. I am sure some of you have forgotten by now, so allow me to introduce myself again. I am the Sage Sion."

A greater panic seized the bus. Judging by their reactions, everyone seemed to remember her. It didn't seem like Tomochika had been thrown back in time by herself. According to her memory, her homeroom teacher would be killed by Sion shortly, but this time the teacher didn't interrupt her. The look of sheer terror on his face made it seem like he remembered what had happened to him before.

Maybe the people missing are the ones Takatou killed? Tomochika thought to herself. *But didn't he kill Sion too? Oh, he never finished her off, did he?*

Yogiri had killed the individual parts of her body to torture information out of her. After getting the information he needed about the Philosopher's Stones, he had left her alone. Now that she thought about it, Sion's movements did seem unnatural somehow compared to when they had met before. It was possible her arms and legs were still dead.

"Everyone, please listen! I understand your confusion, but you won't resolve anything by panicking like this. Could you please calm down for a moment?"

In contrast to the last time this scene had played out, Sion waited patiently for them to quiet down. Eventually, the students grew calmer and waited to hear what Sion had to say.

"Now then, to be quite honest, I am confused as well. To put things simply, what you all experienced up until now has been a dream."

"Excuse me?" Tomochika blurted out, her voice overlapping with a number of others. "Umm! Can I ask a question?!" she raised her hand.

"Yes. Tomochika Dannoura, wasn't it?"

"Uhh...are you trying to write off everything that happened as just a dream?!"

"I suppose that's what it would mean," Sion replied, tilting her head to the side. It seemed she didn't understand the situation particularly well either.

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MY INSTANT DEATH ABILITY IS SO OVERPOWERED, NO ONE IN THIS OTHER WORLD STANDS A CHANCE AGAINST ME!

Side Story

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The Interstice

Asaka Takatou was living with Yogiri in the mountains of a certain prefecture. Since leaving the Institute, they had come across mysterious cults and monsters from urban legends, but that was at least a step up from the world-destroying gods and kings of the world they were dealing with underground.

Currently security around and observation of Yogiri were extremely tight, making sure that nothing out of the ordinary occurred. There didn't seem to be any threat to the world at the moment, so they had been able to live in relative peace.

"Are you saying I'm fired?" Asaka asked in a dumbfounded voice, sitting in the living room of their house. Across the table from her was her supervisor, Shiraishi.

"More or less. I guess that's what they'd call a dismissal like this nowadays." On the table between them was a stack of papers labeled "Advanced Notice of Dismissal."

"Don't you think a topic like this deserves a heavier atmosphere?!" Asaka had been totally blindsided. She couldn't even imagine it actually being possible. She joked like it wasn't a big deal, but that was only because she wasn't able to process that it was actually true.

"I considered being a bit more solemn about this, but I figured I'd try to just say it outright."

"Wait, wait, wait! This is a serious topic! I'm out of a job here!"

"Legally, we have to give you thirty days notice, so that should be plenty of time to find something else."

"Don't act like it's that easy!"

"And it might not be my place to say, but you've probably got quite the bank account balance by now, don't you? You went pretty wild with that first paycheck, but after that you haven't really spent much."

"That might be true, but I can't just bum around without a job because I have money!" In reality, she had been paid an unreasonable sum to take care

of Yogiri. If she avoided indulging in extreme luxuries, she could probably live the rest of her life on her savings alone.

"Again, it might be weird coming from me, but did you really see yourself doing this job forever? Luckily, you're in a position where you can quit in one piece, so I think you're better off taking the opportunity while you still can."

"Are you saying there was a chance I wouldn't be in one piece? Well, I guess that's obvious. You do run this place like some sort of secret society."

"For the record, we are technically a government institution, but you're more or less correct. It's not normal for someone who's come into contact with ALOM to be able to quit. To be blunt, we typically deal pretty violently with people who try to quit."

"Violently?"

"Most Class C employees have bombs implanted in them."

"Huh? Wait, me too?! You said anyone who's seen Yogiri is a Class C employee, right?!" On the surface, his claim seemed ridiculous, but employees of the Institute held a mountain's worth of secrets that they couldn't risk getting out. Maybe it wasn't all that unbelievable after all.

"You don't have to worry about it. You were a special exception, and were never made into a Class C employee, so you don't have the bomb. Of course, you are still bound to confidentiality, so you'll be monitored for the rest of your life. It would be quite a problem if you were to tell anyone about what you learned here. But don't worry, we'll make sure it's not obvious that you're under surveillance."

"Why am I being fired anyway?" she asked, remembering she hadn't actually heard the most important part of this conversation. The shock of the notice had made her forget to ask.

"The main reason would be that you've completed the objective we hired you for. Though ALOM's behavior is still abnormal in some sense, he's solidified his identity as an ordinary Japanese middle school boy. So the work we asked you to do is finished."

"Well...I guess he is going to school now and has friends and everything, so there isn't much left for me to teach him." Yogiri was pretty intelligent, so there wasn't much left for Asaka to do. He was doing well in all of his subjects in school, so he didn't need any supplementary lessons from her. At this point, her job was just to take care of his everyday needs. That meant

mostly cooking, cleaning, and other household chores, but that wasn't something only she could do. In short, if he was saying her job was complete, she couldn't argue.

"The biggest thing is that his power has been successfully sealed away. He won't be using it indiscriminately or unintentionally anymore." The major issue with Yogiri coming into contact with society at large was the way in which his powers worked. He himself had agreed that was a problem and had cooperated with the Institute to seal them off.

Of course, no one else could interfere with his power, so it was necessary if they wanted to avoid hiding him away underground. The seal was something Yogiri had put on himself. He could freely remove it at any time, so in reality, things weren't that different from before, but the fact that he would have to consciously release the seal to use his powers was a big change. With that in place and the persona of an ordinary Japanese person, the issue was mostly resolved. That agreement had been enough to allow him to begin attending school.

"Hmm. But will things be that simple? Maybe it's not my place to say, but can you really fire me that easily? What will Yogiri—"

"They already talked to me about it."

Asaka turned at the sound of the voice behind her and saw Yogiri step into the living room, home from school.

"Oh, welcome back. So, what do you mean?"

"I figured this situation is pretty strange for you. I'm sure there are lots of things you want to do with your life. You're still young, so I thought it wasn't fair to make you take care of me forever."

"Well...I can't say the thought never occurred to me." She wasn't necessarily happy about the thought of growing old watching over Yogiri for the rest of her life. But she couldn't just throw everything away and run. If things went wrong, she could even be considered responsible for bringing about the end of the world.

"I think I'll be able to manage on my own now, so I think you should get a proper job."

"Really? Even Yogiri is going to say that to me?" She couldn't help but feel impressed. She had never imagined he would be so considerate of her situation. "But where do I go from here?" Even if Yogiri was sending her away out of consideration for her, it didn't change the fact she'd be left

unemployed. Memories of her hellish experience hunting for jobs made her want to curl up into a ball and cry.

"We're not planning on forcing you to leave," Yogiri said. "We don't want to cause problems for you, so you're welcome to stay if you want to. I just thought it was too much to ask you to stay forever. You don't have to leave right away; you can wait until you've found another job."

"Another job, huh? What is it that I wanted to do, anyway?" Thinking back, she hadn't really considered anything other than being hired at a major company and figuring it out from there. Perhaps her difficulty in finding a job was that her prospective employers had seen through the shallowness of her thinking.

"Anyway, I'm going out in a bit," Yogiri said, heading to his room.

"That was a bit curt, don't you think?" Shiraishi asked, a little taken aback.

"It would be stranger for him to be glued to his family at this age, don't you think?"

"Is that all it is? Also, I noticed he's started using *'ore'* to refer to himself."

"That's also an age thing, I bet. I was a bit surprised at first too, but I think that's pretty normal for middle school. There are some kids who say *'boku'* forever, but it does sound a bit childish." Asaka recalled when her male friends had suddenly started referring to themselves by the more mature-sounding *"ore."* It seemed the change was a deliberate one.

"That aside, is there any job you could recommend me for?" Asaka asked.

"Are you sure you want to work somewhere that has any connection to us?"

"That's...a good point. Oh, speaking of which, what should I write about this place on my resume?"

"The Institute is a public organization, so you can feel free to mention us by name. Of course, you'll have to lie about what you did here."

"Hmm...that's going to make things pretty vague. I can't imagine that will go well in interviews."

"I'm sure you'll manage."

"You really act like it's not your problem at all."

"That's because it isn't my problem, but I'm confident in your skills. Your ability to adapt to the situation here has been incredible. Normally, no

one would be able to remain calm in a mind-boggling situation like this. I think you've proven yourself quite well here."

"I wouldn't say I dealt with it all that calmly. So, where am I supposed to get work that will only look at how 'adaptable' I am?"

"How about a business that trades goods in rougher parts of the world?"

"Even if I could do that well, I'm not sure I'd want to. You're not really thinking that hard about this, are you?"

"I think I'm giving it rather serious consideration." Shiraishi wasn't exactly in tune with the outside world himself, so job advice from him probably wouldn't be much to count on.

"If I go off to work somewhere else, won't I get attacked by weirdos again? I've been through some ridiculous stuff already."

"I can't really say much to that...but most of those events were caused by AΩ himself. Once you separate from him, I imagine those kinds of things will stop happening."

"I'm not so sure about that, though I'd be more than happy if those people from the dark side of the world or whatever decided I have nothing to do with him." She understood that most of the supernatural experiences she'd had were caused by being around Yogiri, so she wasn't especially worried about those kinds of things happening anymore. The problem was people and organizations that had an interest in him.

"I don't think those kinds of people have the time to be messing with you. Any organizations with that kind of influence are kept pretty busy, so I wouldn't expect them to waste efforts going after someone who's washed their hands of the whole affair."

On top of scientific advancements that far exceeded what was known to the public, there were plenty of supernatural powers in the world, from gods and curses to magic and youkai. While those things might have had a faint connection to the surface of society, the vast majority of their dealings were hidden in darkness.

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

And so, Asaka began looking for work.

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Yogiri felt like it was possible he could die now. He had sealed away all of his powers, so he could neither see killing intent nor kill anyone anymore. He could remove the seal and use his power again, but otherwise he was like any other middle school boy. That said, he couldn't be sure his powers were really sealed away. He thought they were, but he didn't understand his own abilities all that well. He had been born with them and could use them as easily as his arms and legs, but that didn't mean he really knew how they worked.

He hadn't told any of that to the people at the Institute, though. He didn't want them to realize he was vulnerable. If he could still detect killing intent, he could remove his own seals to defend himself. He wanted them to think that. He didn't know how the Institute had felt about his report, but for now he was able to live peacefully.

"Hey, you're gonna get hit by a car!"

"Huh?" Yogiri turned to see his classmate, Mari Matsushima.

"The light is flashing."

Turning to look back at the traffic signal, he saw that the pedestrian light was indeed flashing, but he was still standing in the middle of the intersection.

"Oh, sorry." Yogiri hurried to the other side of the street. He was so used to living a life where no matter what happened, the other party would die to keep him safe, so his sense of danger to himself was extremely weak.

I need to be a lot more careful, he thought. He was prepared to accept his fate if he was killed in a traffic accident, but that would still have a traumatic impact on the people that hit him. Him dying in a traffic accident wouldn't be the end of the story.

"You space out a lot, huh?" Mari said.

"I guess so. I don't think that's a good thing."

"I'm not saying it's bad. Thanks to that, fate was able to bring us together here. Can we go hang out at your place?"

"Why?"

"Why? Because we're friends!"

"Are we?"

"What? We've been through so much together, of course we have a deep bond now!"

Did her memories not get erased properly?

Yogiri had been wrapped up in a bizarre supernatural incident with Mari and another girl, Ichiko Mita. Mari had told them about a ghost named Lady Shirokubi, who appeared if you heard her story, and it had actually happened. Many people had been killed in that incident, so in hopes of sparing them the trauma of having witnessed it, a fox youkai had used her powers to wipe their memories of the incident. But even if she had forgotten the incident, it seemed Mari still remembered having spent that time with him.

"But why my house?" Yogiri asked.

"I was interested in it because it looked like a haunted house, but you live there, so you don't like people thinking about it that way, right?"

"Yeah, it's annoying when people dare each other to come to our house."

"So, if someone goes there and sees for sure that it's not a haunted house, they can tell people about it and stop the rumors, right?"

"I don't know about that. But if you really want to come, I guess that's fine."

It was no more than an old mansion. There was nothing there that they needed to keep hidden. There was always a chance they'd be visited by some youkai, but if the intruders saw ordinary people there, they would likely be able to tell what was going on and respond accordingly.

"Okay, let's go!" said Mari.

"Right now? It's pretty far."

"You walk to school every day, don't you? It can't be that far."

"Well, if you don't mind, that's fine."

Yogiri started heading home with Mari in tow.

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"Why is it so far away?!" Mari cried as they made it to the outskirts of the city where Yogiri lived.

"It's only a little farther."

"You walk this every day? Are you insane?!"

"Normally, I get a ride part way."

"So why are you walking today?! Are you trying to scare me off?!"

"No idea. Sometimes they don't come to pick me up." The people who drove him around worked for the Institute. It was possible they were avoiding the two of them because they were on guard against Mari.

“Oh! Yogiri, are you heading home now? With a friend?” As they climbed the hill leading to Yogiri’s house, they came across Asaka, riding by on a bike.

“Yeah. You on your way home from an interview? I guess I shouldn’t ask how it went, huh?”

“Your consideration is rather painful, Yogiri.”

“Is this your sister?” Mari asked, confused.

“Nope. I’m not sure how to explain it.” Yogiri realized he had never considered how he’d explain his relationship with Asaka to people outside the Institute.

“Hmm. Maybe something like a live-in tutor?” Asaka offered, climbing off her bike.

“You don’t have to walk with us, you know,” Yogiri said.

“There’s no starting again once I’ve stopped going uphill. I don’t have the stamina for that.” Recently Asaka had been taking her bike to the closest train station, where she would commute into the city for job interviews. “Did no one come to pick you up?”

“Nope.”

“I guess that happens sometimes.” They had never promised they’d come to get him, They typically just showed up on his way to and from school. “So, who’s this?”

“Ah, I’m Mari Matsushima. We’re in the same class. I asked him to show me his house.”

“Oh? Is our place in good enough shape to be having visitors?” Asaka sank into thought. It didn’t seem like their house was in a condition where they could confidently invite guests over anytime. Yogiri hadn’t thought about it that deeply, but maybe this wasn’t a great idea after all. It wasn’t like there was so much garbage lying around that there was nowhere to walk, but it might not have been in a state that was acceptable for inviting people over.

“Maybe I’ll head home first and make sure everything is okay inside, so please wait outside for a bit. Actually, do you smell something?”

“What do you mean?”

“It smells like something’s burning,” Mari observed, after which Yogiri noticed it too. And as they kept walking, the smell grew stronger and stronger. As they made their way off the main road onto the street leading to their house, it was accompanied by billowing smoke.

“Well...I guess we don’t need to worry about whether it’s in good enough shape to have guests over,” Asaka commented.

“The house is on fire, huh?” Yogiri said.

“Huh? You guys are awfully calm about this! Your house is on fire here!” Mari was far more shocked than either of them.

“We deal with a lot of things like this.”

“You do?!”

“Mari, was it? Sorry, but I think you’ll have to head home now. Here, you can borrow my bike.”

“Huh? Uh...okay?”

Asaka pushed her bicycle at Mari. There wasn’t much else Mari could do, so she hopped onto it. The way back was all downhill, so it wouldn’t take her long to get home.

“I might not be able to make it to school tomorrow, Matsushima. Could you tell the teacher for me?”

“U-Uhh, sure?” Not quite sure of what was going on, Mari took off.

“Let me call someone... Hello, Shiraishi? Our house is kind of on fire... Huh? You’re dealing with something too? Another king of the world? You’re under attack? And still dealing with it? What do you mean ‘run away’?! Shouldn’t you be the one calling me, then?! Hello? Hello?!”

“What happened?” Yogiri asked.

“They’re pretty tied up right now, so it looks like they won’t be able to send help for a while. What should we do? Can your power deal with this?” Yogiri could likely use his power to stop the fire. The target was pretty clear, so the only victim would be the house itself.

“I could, but then we’d get an earful from the Institute later.”

“Hmm. I don’t think the Institute is in a spot to care much about your seals, but it’s just a house fire, so we can probably deal with it normally. I’ll call 119 for now.” Asaka pulled out her smartphone and made a call. “No answer. It just keeps ringing. Is that normal? I’ve never called 119 before.”

“Maybe you’re out of cell range?”

“I’m still getting a signal, though.”

As Asaka tried calling a number of times, Mari came speeding back on her bike.

“What’s wrong?” Yogiri asked.

“Something’s happened! Something huge!”

“Something huge?”

“I can’t really explain; just come with me!”

They couldn’t just leave the building to burn, but they were curious about what had Mari so flustered. There wasn’t much they could do about the fire now, so they followed her. Making it back to the main road and following it through the forest back to town, they immediately realized what had shocked her. The sky was red, and the buildings and telephone poles were all black, as if they’d been drenched in ink.

“You’re right, this is pretty big.”

“That’s all you have to say?!” Mari exclaimed.

“Well, this is a problem. I feel like I’ve seen something similar before,” Asaka murmured.

“You mean the time you wandered into that weird world?” Yogiri said. “I think this is different.”

“If this is a different world, can you get us back?”

“I don’t know. I don’t really know what this place is, so it would be pretty hard. For now, I’ll undo my seal.”

“Are you sure?”

“I don’t have a choice. This isn’t normal.” They’d be totally helpless without Yogiri’s power. It wouldn’t be strange for them to be killed, never knowing what was going on.

“Let’s go take a look in town for now.”

“You want to go in *there*?!” Mari shouted.

“Well, our house is still on fire, and we can’t reach anyone by phone.”

“Ugh...I wanna go home...”

They wouldn’t accomplish anything by standing here and talking, so the three of them decided to head into the city.

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“Huh, you can see the bath from in here.” Yogiri looked around the room, rather interested.

“Is it okay for us to be here?” Understanding what this place was, Mari was hesitant to step inside.

“Yeah, I don’t know how I feel about bringing middle schoolers here. How did we end up in this situation?” Asaka sat down on the bed, phone in

hand. She couldn't reach anyone she called, most of the contacts in her phone having turned into a garbled mess. Among them was one name that was still clear. Desperate for anything, Asaka had called the number to have one of her old friends pick up on the other end. Her friend had told them to head here, a hotel with flashing neon lights, standing among a crowd of pitch-black buildings.

"Well, I was looking for help, and it's nice to have a place to rest! But what is going on here?!" Asaka shouted into her phone, still connected to her friend.

"That's what I want to know. How did you end up in the Interstice?"

"The Interstice?"

"It's that weird-looking world you're stuck in. It's a little offset from ours, in a way related to our world, and in a way not. That's where people involved with the occult take their battles when they don't want them to happen in the real world."

"How do you know so much about it?"

"You know what my family does, right?"

"You run lo— Er, leisure hotels, right?" she corrected herself, though she wasn't sure if there was a point in front of the kids.

"Actually, we do the same thing in the dark side of the world as well. It's a pretty gloomy place, right? There's quite a bit of demand for places like ours there."

"Okay, that's fine, but how do we get out?"

"That depends on how you got in, I guess."

"Can't you come help us?!"

"No way. I can get in and out using my family's methods, but I have no idea if that'll work for you guys. And I don't want to go there anyway."

"I guess that makes sense. Sorry. So then, can I ask you to contact someone for me?"

"I should be able to do that much."

Asaka gave her a message and the contact information for the Institute. They had a working knowledge of the occult there, so they might have been able to do something to help once they knew about the situation.

"Either way, thanks for helping us so fast."

"I hadn't heard from you for a while, so I have to say it was pretty funny seeing a call from you coming from the Interstice."

Her friend had given them a place to stay despite Asaka not explaining their situation, so she couldn't really complain. After saying thanks again, she hung up.

"I feel like no matter where we hide, if some mysterious organization sent us here, they'll find us in no time," Yogiri said.

"According to my friend, this is something like neutral territory. There shouldn't be any fighting in the hotel itself...but that's just a gentleman's agreement, really."

"Can you contact Shiraishi?"

Shiraishi's number was still intact in her phone, so after succeeding in contacting her friend, Asaka tried calling him a number of times, but to no avail.

"Doesn't look like it. I couldn't quite get what he was saying last time we talked, so it might just be a misunderstanding, but it sounded like there was some sort of underground organization, and a king of the world was fighting them."

"A king of the world?"

"One showed up at the facility while we were still there. I wonder what happened to him? I'm pretty sure I remember him going to find you, Yogiri..." After rampaging through the facility, he had gone to go look for Yogiri but then disappeared. Yogiri had probably killed him, but it was possible Yogiri wasn't even aware of that.

"Lots of people have tried to kill me, so he was probably one of those? I don't remember."

"There were five of them originally, so with him gone, I suppose there are four now," Asaka explained. "The five of them had struck some kind of balance, keeping each other in check, so now that one of them is missing, I guess there's been a bit of upheaval as they work to settle things. I guess that whole thing has reached the Institute now."

"Does that have anything to do with us?"

"The ninjas were able to fight off the guys that attacked us, but it was basically mutual destruction, so they didn't have the manpower to deal with the fire afterwards."

"We have ninjas, huh?"

"Assuming I heard him correctly, of course. Anyway, it seems they attacked the Institute as well, so they're pretty busy. He told us to run away

until things calm down."

"Uh, what are you two talking about? Is this safe for me to hear?" Mari asked, still in a state of total confusion.

"It's fine; we can just erase your memory later," Yogiri replied.

"Seriously?!"

"We've done it once already."

"You've been casually erasing my memories?!"

"Speaking of which, where is that fox lady? She seemed reliable in situations like this." Asaka was speaking about the mysterious woman with fox ears. She was the one who had previously erased Mari's memories.

"I don't have any way of contacting her," Yogiri replied, before boredom led him to turn on the television. The device displayed some incomprehensible images, accompanied by what sounded like Buddhist prayers. Asaka immediately turned off the unnerving show.

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They spent the next few days in that room. Despite being in this strange world, the hotel had staff and room service. However, since communication with them was proving a bit difficult, they had kept contact to a minimum. Maybe because it called itself a leisure hotel, the room was equipped with a number of things for entertainment, like a karaoke machine and video games.

They had figured once things settled down, they'd be contacted by the Institute, but no matter how long they waited, no word came. With no way to reach the outside world, they had no clue what shape the Institute was in.

Asaka had phoned her friend again to see what she could find out, but it appeared the other woman had also failed to make contact.

"We can't just stay here forever, can we?" Asaka said as she hung up the phone.

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“We’ve missed a few days of school already,” Yogiri replied.

“Even if I get home, I’m gonna look totally suspicious for disappearing for so long and having no memory of it...” Mari added.

Asaka and Yogiri could probably manage fine, but the real problem was that Mari had been caught up in the situation too.

“I’m sure the national whatever will be able to do something about that for you.”

“The national what? For starters, who *are* you, Takatou?”

“Who knows? I don’t really know that much myself.”

“I was pretty excited at first to find this mysterious world where good and evil do battle, but all we’ve done is stay in this room, sing karaoke, and play video games.”

“I’m pretty bored too. Maybe we should get going,” Yogiri agreed.

“But go where?”

“To the Institute, I guess. We don’t really have any other clues.” The facility that had contained Yogiri had been moved nearby when he had come to this city. There was a similar underground space here, so the organization had continued to contain dangerous creatures there. This strange world seemed to take its form based on the real world, so if they went to the Institute’s facility here, they might find the same buildings.

“We don’t have any other ideas, do we?” Asaka admitted.

The three of them left the hotel behind. The city was dark as always, the neon lights of the hotel the only thing breaking the monotony.

Asaka covered her ears as a sudden roar split the air. It was loud enough to cause the sky to shake along with the blackened buildings around them. Looking towards the source of the noise, she saw an enormous bird flying through the air, its rainbow-colored feathers standing out as it soared through the red and black world. Something was firing from its mouth, reducing the buildings in front of it to dust. It seemed what they were hearing was the side effect of that attack. The enormous bird seemed to be fighting something. They couldn’t see what its opponent was, but the beast was moving around, trying to chase it.

“Shouldn’t we run?!” Mari cried out.

“That thing could probably attack us anywhere we went just by turning a little,” Yogiri answered. “I don’t think running will get us very far.”

“Then what do we do?!”

“If it attacks us, we’ll just have to kill it.” Yogiri had no intention of preemptively killing the bird, but at this rate he wouldn’t have a choice. It was only a matter of time. The bird’s attacks were getting closer and closer.

However, the enormous creature’s assault soon came to an end. A terrifyingly large explosion consumed it, blowing away the blackened buildings and creating an updraft that lifted clouds of dust and debris into the air. An explosion that massive should have created a huge amount of light and sound, but the area around the three of them was more or less untouched.

“Uhh...I’m pretty sure I’ve seen one of those in a textbook before,” Mari said, dumbfounded. “That’s a mushroom cloud.”

“I don’t really know what it is, but I killed the stuff that looked like it was going to hurt us,” Yogiri said offhandedly.

“Oh, is that why I didn’t hear anything?” Asaka asked.

“Yeah, if this is what the fights look like, it’s no wonder they can’t do it in the real world,” Mari said, unexpectedly casual.

“Either way, this place seems dangerous, so let’s get going to the facility. I get the feeling it’ll be better out in the mountains!” Asaka suggested. She had no proof of that, but she couldn’t help but be suspicious of the blackened townscape.

“Yo. Sorry for bringing you here without saying anything.”

As they made to leave the city behind, they found a boy standing on the road. He seemed a bit younger than Yogiri, probably in the lower grades of elementary school.

“Who are you?” Yogiri asked.

“I thought I was pretty famous in this world, but I guess you don’t know me. I’m the king. I just finished dealing with the other pretenders, so I’m the one and only king of this world now,” he said, his voice bright and cheery. The power balance between the five kings made it so that they couldn’t do anything to each other, but it didn’t mean they recognized each other’s authority. They were destined to fight if there was a chance to do so, and Yogiri had created that chance for them.

“I don’t know about any king, but if you brought us here, can you take us back to the real world?”

“Of course; that would be easy. I’m the one who created this world. I can bring anyone here and send anyone back.”

“Then can you do it? I don’t really care why you brought us here, but we

can't stay forever."

"I don't want you here forever either. I don't acknowledge his claims, but there was a guy who called himself a king and one of you might have killed him. I can't just let that slide, can I?"

"I don't care about you at all," Yogiri said. "If you're not going to get involved with normal society, you can be the king of the dark side of the world all you want. I won't mess with you. Is that enough?"

"Of course not. If I leave you alive, there will always be that shadow over my throne. I want to be able to proclaim myself king with nothing left hanging."

"Then that means you want to fight?"

"I don't think it'll be much of a fight," the boy replied. "You're just going to die."

"If I die, will you take them back to the real world?"

"I could, but the moment you die, the heat and radiation in this place will kill them instantly. I can't do anything about that."

"You know about me, then?"

"Yup. You might think of yourself as something special, but there are plenty of sealed off spaces around the world. There are a lot of people like you. We've been studying you, so we have ways of dealing with you."

"Oh, really?" Yogiri said in a tired voice as the boy fell to the ground.

"You know, maybe you should have thought a bit more before killing him..." Asaka said.

With the boy dead, there might have been no way left to get back home. At least, that's what she was worried about, but it quickly proved to not be a problem. Color soon returned to the area around them. They had made it back without too much effort at all.

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They made up a stupid story about Yogiri and Mari being stranded in the wilderness. Of course, all of Mari's memories of the Interstice had been erased. After a while, they were contacted by the Institute, which had been caught up in the strife between the remaining kings of the world, but it seemed the organization would be able to recover.

In the meantime, Asaka and Yogiri moved to an apartment near his

school. If there was a chance of something happening no matter where they lived, they figured it was best to live somewhere convenient for them. That said, it was still too dangerous to have ordinary civilians around, so the Institute had purchased all the rooms in the buildings so that everyone who lived there was now affiliated with them.

After that, Asaka put her job search on hold, deciding to start searching for a husband instead.

"All right, I'm heading out now!"

"Another party today?" Yogiri asked over the breakfast table, looking a little confused.

"Today is something like a class reunion."

"What's happened to you all of a sudden, Asaka?"

"I've been thinking, you know. Maybe it's a bad idea to leave you on your own." Yogiri had made considerable progress towards becoming an ordinary middle school student. But the fact that he had been able to kill an enemy who looked like an elementary school student without the slightest hint of hesitation was a bit of a concern. "I thought I'd adopt you, then you won't have to worry about me anymore."

"What? You're going to become my mom?"

"Yes. So now I need to find you a father!"

"You're not just trying to become a housewife so you don't have to find a job, are you?"

It wasn't impossible for someone to adopt a child while single, but it wasn't particularly normal either. That's why she was looking to get married. Yogiri's guess wasn't entirely wrong, but that wasn't the main reason for what she was doing—or so she tried to convince herself.

Afterword

I'm sure you would be pretty upset if the story ended here, but there is going to be a continuation, so don't worry. It should be okay! If by chance the next book can't be published, I will still finish it and publish it to the web! Of course, I could end up involved in some accident or getting sick, but if that happens, I can only apologize. I'm healthy at the moment, so I don't expect anything like that to occur.

Then again, COVID-19 is still running rampant. I heard a number of my colleagues have ended up catching it, so I can't be optimistic and say it will never come for me. I will be careful, but please take care of yourself as well, readers.

On another note, I'm still having no luck getting my hands on a PS5. The right control stick on my PS4 controller, the DualShock 4, is starting to go, so I'd rather get a new console than just replace a single controller. The DualShock 4 is a pretty expensive controller too...

Now then! I only need to do two pages for the afterword this time, so I can fill it up without having to think of anything extra to write!

My thanks:

To my supervising editor. Rather than last minute, I'm sorry for being just plain late this time. Thank you so much for your work.

To the illustrator, Chisato Naruse. Thank you as always for your wonderful illustrations. I'm sorry I couldn't make a stable schedule for you.

I know I'm always apologizing, but I really want to do something about the schedule this time!

Next is volume 12. I hope to see you there!

Tsuyoshi Fujitaka
藤孝 剛志

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Hello, this is the illustrator, Chisato Naruse.

When I first got the manuscript for this novel, that development at the end had me shouting out loud.

Really, ***this*** is what we're doing?

I have no idea what the next volume is going to look like, but I'm really looking forward to it.

I hope we can meet again in volume 12!

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Bonus Short Story

Question Corner 6

Tomochika: Okay, hello! I'm Tomochika Dannoura, and this is Question Corner 6! Like always, we're back here for a sixth time! I figured you must all be running out of questions by now, but we'll do our best to answer what you have!
Mokomoko: *We have received a mountain of questions that have nothing to do with the story, so they may prove quite challenging for us to answer!*
Tomochika: A mountain of questions?
Mokomoko: *Okay...perhaps I exaggerated a little. The number is still quite manageable!*
Tomochika: We use basically all of the questions, so please feel free to send anything in! We'll be waiting for them!
Mokomoko: *That said, the story does appear to be reaching its conclusion, so if we receive too many questions, we may not have a chance to answer them all.*
Tomochika: I don't think you need to worry about that. We're not going to get *that* many questions. I bet we'll be able to answer them all in the next volume.
Mokomoko: *I feel like that in and of itself is a far too pessimistic outlook, but no matter. Let us view the first question!*

Q: I feel like Yogiri Takatou is probably the strongest character ever, but a lot of people say that ○○ is the strongest character ever. What do you think about that as an author? Do you expect any characters on ○○'s level to show up in the story?

Zero

Mokomoko: *Though it is a bit odd, in a way you could consider this a*

question about the very core of the story!
Tomochika: I feel like there would be some problems with that, so I censored the character's name. I don't think it really matters who it is, so the readers can go ahead and insert whoever they think the strongest character is in there.
Mokomoko: *However, for a story that has yet to reach its conclusion, I believe it is somewhat meaningless to engage in a discussion of power levels.*
Tomochika: Wouldn't you say being the strongest only applies to the world you're in? This is a story about cheating to easily get past all of the obstacles, so arguing over who is the strongest seems like a mistake.
Mokomoko: *To be blunt, in the world of this series, the young man is the strongest character. So even if ○○ were to appear in this series, they would be defeated by him.*
Tomochika: There are more details about that in volume 11, so go ahead and read that if you want to learn more!
Mokomoko: *Of course, if in some other work, there was a character who would prove immune to such an instant death cheat—the young man's power would likely fail to harm them if he were to appear in their world. But of course, it is all up to the author of that world.*
Tomochika: Talking about who is stronger than who is fun and all, but I don't think it's something you should take so seriously.

Q: Who is the strongest character to show up in the story besides Yogiri? Third place works too.

Kanral

Tomochika: Well, that's kind of a timely question. The UEG seems pretty ridiculous in volume 11, doesn't she? She seems to be on a totally different level than everyone else.
Mokomoko: *There used to be those strong enough to deal with the UEG's power, but they have not yet shown themselves in the story, so among those in the story itself, she would be the second strongest.*
Tomochika: I feel like there's a huge spoiler incoming.
Mokomoko: *That is why I tried to cover it up by saying they have not shown themselves in the story!*
Tomochika: So, what about third place and down?

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Mokomoko: *Hmm. There is much to consider in that regard. The UEG is capable of more or less anything, so a discussion of who is the most powerful typically ends there, but when speaking of the others, it is quite a bit more complex.*
Tomochika: So please think of everyone else after that on your own! Honestly, I don't really know either! Everyone just kind of dies when they go up against us!
Mokomoko: *Hm. That should be sufficient for this time! We are always accepting new questions, so please send them in at any time!*

Question Corner 6 Extra Edition

Tomochika: Okay, hello! I'm Tomochika Dannoura! Welcome to the extra edition of Question Corner 6! We already did Question Corner 6 as a special in this book, and we had some questions that we couldn't quite fit, but it's the same every time, so you probably don't need an explanation!
Mokomoko: *I do not believe we need much setup either, so let us proceed to the questions right away!*

Q: Dannoura and Yogiri almost never take baths in the story, but I imagine passing through the jungle must have left you feeling pretty gross. So when do you take baths?

Ichioko

Tomochika: Uhh...well, you know, these things are normally kept vague in books. It's the same as how you don't usually write about every time the characters go to the bathroom!
Mokomoko: *Well, that depends on the theme of the work. Stories aiming to portray a realistic military record cannot afford to omit such depictions.*
Yogiri: To explain it briefly, we have a lot more stuff in our backpack than it looks like, so we have water and things we can use to wipe ourselves down with.
Tomochika: Right! That's what we've been doing! Between the lines! Between the chapters! Between the books!

Mokomoko: *Were you? I do not recall such a thing.*
Tomochika: Of course we were!

Q: I have a question for Takatou and Dannoura!
If you were to get Battlesong installed in you, what kind of power would you like?

Nameless Someone

Tomochika: So, what do you think? I think they're asking about classes and skills and the like.
Yogiri: Good question. I feel like something simple that boosts my physical abilities would be interesting. I don't really need any special powers or anything.
Mokomoko: *After all, you have the most powerful special power available already.*
Tomochika: So you'd probably like any sort of warrior class. Either way, if you raised your level, your physical abilities would improve automatically.
Yogiri: What about you, Dannoura?
Tomochika: Hmm. I'd like something really adaptable. Something that at first glance doesn't look too useful, but if you use it well can be really effective. I don't know what kind of classes there are, but among the ones we've seen so far, Cook looks pretty interesting to me.
Mokomoko: *That brings an end to the extra edition! There are more questions in the other Question Corners, so if interested, please take a look at them!*

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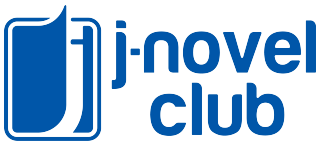

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My Instant Death Ability Is So Overpowered, No One in This Other World Stands a Chance Against Me! Volume 11
by Tsuyoshi Fujitaka

Translated by Nathan Macklem
Edited by Tess Nanavati

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